

MILITARY Miniatures

IN REVIEW

Volume One, Number Three

On or about, 1994

The Big Punch Verlinden's 15cm Howitzer



**TAMIYA'S
ALL NEW
PANTHER G**

**Vietnam
Hauler:
The AFV
Club M35**

**AFV Club's New Modern Link-to-Link
Accurate Armor's Valentine**

Book Services Menu

The following are served with a generous portion of quick service and a dash of limited availability. Order early to avoid disappointment. Reservations are strongly suggested, and are accepted by phone or fax. This will reserve your title(s) for 7 days. This is not a "stockless" system. We will special order titles if they are available to us. All orders are pre-paid and we can not yet accept credit cards. All books are soft cover unless noted otherwise. Bon Appetite!

Panzer at Samur, Number 1 (revised)

Slightly revised version of the original. A few more pictures of the King Tiger. Still the best reference around on the King Tiger. Also covers the Jagdtiger and the Lynx. Japanese and English text. 60 pages.

List \$31.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$25.50

Panzer at Samur, Number 2

More of the Samur vehicles. Excellent close-ups and drawings. Covers the Panther, Jagdpanther, Bergepanther and the Panzer Werfer. Also contains a brief study of Panzer crew uniforms. 60 pages. Japanese and English text.

List \$25.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$20.75

Panzer at Samur, Number 3

More and more of that good Samur stuff. This time covering the Hummel, Nashorn, Marder III, Wespe and Lorraine Schlepper. Excellent and rare photos. Japanese and English text. 60 pages. List \$28.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$23.25

Panzerfile 1993-94

A very comprehensive compilation of all the German WWII 1/35th scale models available. Includes all the world's manufacturers. Encompasses plastics, resin, full kits, conversions, etched detail sets, tracks and just about anything else you can think of. Many color photos. A great "wish book" and a must for every German armor modeler. Japanese and English text. 60 pages. List \$39.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$30.00

Achtung Panzer No. 2, Panzer III

The most in-depth look at the Panzer III that you're likely to find. Hundreds of line drawings of the smallest details on the tank. Photos too. All variants are covered, including command versions. Japanese and English text.

List \$25.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$20.75

Achtung Panzer No. 3, Panzer IV

This is a re-release of Number 1 in the series, Panzer IV. This revision brings the title up to the standards of Number 2, with more drawings and a generous increase in photos. Square format like number 2. Excellent for the new DML Pzr. IV J. Japanese and English text.

List \$36.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$27.75

Model Art, German Self Propelled Guns

This special issue of the Japanese Magazine *Model Art* concerns the modeling of German SPGs. Hundreds of color photos and line drawings. Japanese text.

List \$32.00; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$25.75

German Fighting Vehicles of WWII, Tank Magazine Special

Hundreds of photos covering the Tiger II; Porsche, Henschel and Jagdtiger. Hummel, 5 ton flak and Kübelwagen. Japanese text.

List \$30.00; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$25.00

German Small Arms & Weapons, Vol. 2, Tank Magazine Special

We have just a few of this elusive volume back in stock. Covers all manner of German small arms such as the Mauser, MG 34, etc. Also covers mortars and artillery up to 17cm. Japanese text. List \$30.00; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$25.00

Italian Campaign Tank Magazine Special

Excellent photo documentation of the German Army in the Italian peninsula. Lots of interesting photos of Fallschirmjäger. Probably the best of all the "campaign" specials. Japanese text.

List \$30.00; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$25.00

Kursk Tank Magazine Special

Cover the build-up just prior to the mammoth German offensive. Excellent photos of uniforms, terrain and softskins. Some armor. Japanese text.

List \$30.00; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$20.00

T-54, T-55, T-64 Tank Magazine Special

An extensive photographic essay on the modern Soviet MBTs. Hundreds of photos plus line drawings. Japanese text.

List \$30.00; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$25.00

Sturm & Drang, Tank Magazine Specials

Each volume pertains to a particular subject. They are literally crammed with photos of the various subjects. Some of the photos are quite rare and many are from private sources. All are Japanese text. All volumes priced separately.

List (each) \$30.00; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$24.00

Volume 1, Tiger I

Volume 2, Sturmgeschutz

Volume 3, 250/251 Halftracks

Volume 4, Panzer IV

Volume 5, Panther

Volume 6, Panzerjäger - EXCELLENT! MMiR Subscriber Price: \$25.50

Militaria Magazine Specials

These French language books showcase various WWII battles. Although published in French, each volume contains many excellent photographs and full color illustrations. All volumes priced separately.

List (each) \$17.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$15.00

No. 3, The Desert War-Tobruk

No. 4, Breakthrough at Sedan -Battle of France.

No. 5, Operation Barbarossa

No. 6, Bir-Hakeim -Desert War 1941-42.

No. 7, Rhine & Danube-The Free French battles for Germany

No. 8, The Battle for Belgium, 1940

No. 9, The Battle for Moscow

No. 10, The Battle for the Reich-Allied battles for Germany

No. 11, D-Day, Part 1 - The first of two parts, the first covers the landings NEW!

Militaria Magazine

The ultimate reference for uniforms and equipment. Full color photographs of *every* piece of equipment and uniform item. All volumes priced separately.

Single Issues: List (each) \$5.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$5.00

Single Issues (English)

No. 1; Seabees, German Peaked Caps, German Assault Packs of WWI, M8 Sherman, German Protection Police of WWII, and more.

No. 2; US Army British made equipment, Mussolini's Black Brigade, British anti-gas equipment, German WWII ID disk, and more.

No. 3; Reenactors of the Battle of the Bulge in full color, Free French Commandos.

No. 4; Soviet Infantry, 116 Pz. Div. insignia.

The Spielberger German Armor & Military Vehicles Series

This much hailed series is now becoming available in English.

All are hard cover with dust jacket.

Volume 1, Panther List \$39.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$33.00

Volume 2, Sturmgeschutz List \$39.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$33.00

Volume 3, Panzer III List \$29.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$23.00

Volume 4, Panzer IV List \$29.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$23.00

T-72 Battlegroup

This book covers the T-72 and its support vehicles; BRDM-2, BMP-2 and the ZSU-23M. A very thorough look at the T-72M1. All aspects of the vehicle illustrated. Black & white and color photos.

List \$13.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$5.00

RZM Home Videos

These video tapes are each compilations of German wartime propaganda newsreels. Each tape retains the authentic German narration. Many types of weapons and uniforms are shown. All the images are clear and low grain. A highly interesting and informative reference source. VHS format.

Blitzkrieg! Germany conquers France, May-June 1940

Third Reich: 1944 "The Desperate Days"

Third Reich: 1945 "The Desperate Days"

List \$34.95; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$29.75

After the Battle Publications

These magnificent publications have recently become available to us in extremely limited quantities. Each is without a doubt, the definitive work on the subject. Literally hundreds of photos in every volume, covering all aspects of the conflict described. If you need to know more about these titles, feel free to call and discuss them. *Satisfaction guaranteed.*

RESERVATIONS ARE MANDATORY on these titles due to their rarity and discount.

Large format (8 1/2 x 12), hardcover with dust jacket.

Battle of the Bulge List \$95.00; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$85.00

Blitzkrieg in the West List \$95.00; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$85.00

Berlin Then and Now List \$95.00; MMiR Subscriber Price: \$85.00

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MILITARY™ MINIATURES

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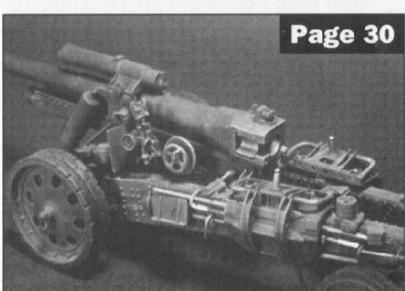


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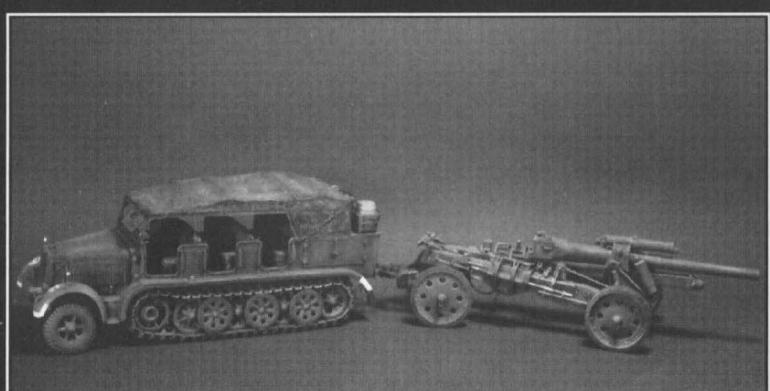
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ON THE COVER:

Scot Bradley's SdKfz. 7 halftrack with 15cm howitzer gets all dressed up and goes for a ride on our first ever color cover. This one's a keeper! The model is the Verlinden product and it's being towed by the Tamiya kit. The base is an old plaster product. The figure is a Hornet conversion and the Motorcycle is the Italeri kit.

From Your Editor



This issue is again reaching you (most likely) after you've expected it to. Here's the reason: in January I published a schedule—right here as a matter of fact—for the 1994 run of MMiR. In this schedule, I wanted to catch up a bit due to the fact that there was such a long gap between the release of the Pilot Issue and Volume One, Number One.

Well they say the road to Hell is paved with good intentions (whatever that means). My intention was to catch up, but this meant that at least one of the issues this year would have to be produced in less than ninety days. Sounds reasonable, right?

The problem is this: given the tremendous amount of research, photography, editing,



phonecalling, whining, etc., this just isn't going to happen. This is a quarterly and it's going to take a quarter to put it out. We're sorry if this PO's anyone out there, but we really have been publishing on a quarterly schedule. Issues since V1, No.1 have all been published at quarterly intervals...just not the quarterly interval we stated back in January.

So here's the new schedule, and we mean it this time: Volume 1, Number 4; October 15. Volume 2, Number 1; January 15. Volume 2, Number 2; April 15 and so on. This schedule has a few hidden advantages. The January issues will always include the report on the Chicago show held late in the year and the July issue will be available for the IPMS Nationals. The April issue also coincides with any Spring shows we may attend as well.

And please, don't be too hard on us if your MMiR doesn't arrive when you want it to. MMiR isn't a train...if it's late you don't miss it! There have been those in the past who have skipped out on you. But that's not us. We're here every day of the week (nights, weekends, holidays, firedrills, hurricanes, etc.). We're running a full-time business *in addition* to the publishing of this here little rag. So we're not headed anywhere in a hurry.

Look, the signpost up ahead...

What's ahead? Well, we are flirting with two ideas at present. Assuming the continuing success of MMiR (meaning: I hope we can keep up with it without dying of acute cardiac stress) we hope to do one of two things. Number one would be going to a bi-monthly format. This means two extra issues per year and would give y'all who read fast some extra reading time. The second option (and this is the one we're leaning towards) is greatly increasing the size of the present piece. This would mean a book of about 100 pages and use of a bit more color. MMiR would be a true book in this form, and much more of an event for both the readers and the advertisers (the small and elite group that they are). Such a book would be "perfect bound" rather than stapled like this one. That means a rigid, glued spine. Playboy is a perfect bound magazine, for example... I mean, at least that's what I hear.

All of this would, of course, depend largely on input from you (who me?), the reader. Each option would require a slight increase in price, so we'd want feedback before we proceed.

That Correspondence Thing

We honestly appreciate all of the very nice notes and letters we have received. Unfortunately we just can't enter into correspondence with everyone who writes. We'd like to, but there wouldn't be time to do the magazine if we did!

This month we (me really) have gone on line with MMiR. I can be reached personally on the Internet network at the handle MMiR35701. This really is the ideal way to chat with us by mail. We can address subscription problems, field questions, and generally (albeit briefly) discuss the "good stuff." There's more on this in the Mail Sack section herein.

There's No Place Like MMiR, There's No Place Like MMiR...

Welcome to Volume One, Number Three. This is our fourth issue and it marks our one year anniversary (no cakes, please). If you've gotten this far, you've noticed our color cover. This is a first for us, and we hope it makes it a little nicer to pull out of the bag—not to mention nicer to see on the shelf.

We are also trying to fatten the thing up a little. This one's forty-four pages versus last time's forty. We'll probably hover right there for the time being. It'll be give of take four pages depending on the number of articles, photos, etc. This also gives us the leeway of including advertisers without shorting you on the good geeky stuff. Enjoy!

Pat Stansell
Publisher

MILITARY™ Miniatures IN REVIEW

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Channeling the Military

I noticed that you mentioned the upcoming premier of the Military Channel in your last issue. I have enclosed an ad from the latest catalog of the military equipment/surplus company, "U.S. Cavalry." Hopefully, you can find some use for this and pass along the info contained (actually it's not a whole lot, but this is the most info I've seen on it, excluding the stuff you guys have mentioned).

MMiR is getting better every issue. The last issue was so good that after reading it 119 times, I cut it up and ate it!

—Russell J. Hammond

Thanks for that tidbit Mr. Hammond. A number of you sent along this ad from the U.S. Cav catalog. We tried several times to call the number listed, but to no avail. All we got was an answering machine that stated it was full. So unfortunately, we have no current news on this subject. We're not discouraged—it appears that U.S. Cav is actually behind the venture, so it's just a matter of time. For those of you who want to try on your own, the info is: The Military Channel, 1230 Liberty Bank Lane, Suite 320, Louisville, KY (502) 254-8130. We will report any developments in a future issue.

Oh—anyone wishing to follow Mr. Hammond's method of enjoying MMiR to the utmost, we suggest washing it down with a good Chardonnay, preferably a California vintage.

✉

HA-GO... Ha!

Congratulations on a very fine magazine, keep up the good work.

What I am writing about is the article by Joe Morgan in the last issue on Fine Mold's Type 95 Ha-Go. He saved me \$130.00. I have wanted

this model ever since I first heard about it, but the high price has kept me from buying it.

Thanks again for the advance warning. I still hope the price of this kit drops a lot more, or that DML or Tamiya may yet release one.

—Rick T. Francis

We are glad to be of assistance. We would like to make this simple statement, however: DON'T LISTEN TO US. Remember, everything you read in these pages is only someone's opinion. Nothing more, nothing less. The main tenant of this publication is, "make up your own mind." Use our information any way you wish, but if you can afford it, find out for yourself if we're right—or wrong.

The massive amount of products out there means that we all (finally) have actual choices. Use this magazine to help make that choice. Mr. Francis did just that, and we're not faulting him for it. It's just that we would hate to become the definitive source for whether or not to buy a particular kit. We want to acquaint you with the pitfalls or lack thereof, but we urge all to draw their own conclusions on any product's merit. As we've said before: the worst thing that can happen is; you have a great time building a model!

O.K. that's our speech.

All that having been said, it really is a shame that so many will pass up the HA-GO kit do to its high price. We agreed with the thrust of Mr. Morgan's review that the kit wasn't a value at all for \$130.00, but may have been one if it was priced in line with its competition. When the Tamiya Type 97 was re-released a few years ago with a forty-seven dollar price tag, few balked. The HA-GO probably would have found a greater audience in that price range.

As for DML or another manufacturer (excluding Hasegawa, who is releasing yet another tankette for \$100+), we haven't heard any news on new Japanese subjects. Although DML really does seem to be on a roll. So, you never know...

✉

Dial-a-Geek

Just wanted to say what a great magazine.

The Issue of Back Issues

A lot of you have requested info on available back issues. So here it is:

Pilot Issue Sorry, sold out. For the longest time, we couldn't give 'em away!

Vol. 1, No. 1 (King Tiger, Maus, Grille)

Vol. 1, No. 2 (JSIIIs, Kubelwagen, Panther, Type 95)

Vol. 1, No. 3 (M35, Panther G, 150 Howitzer, Valentine)

The price of each back issue is \$4.95 plus \$1.50 postage for each issue ordered in the U.S. Back issue orders for more than one issue are sent Priority Two-Day air in the U.S. The postage is \$2.50 each for Canada and this is for Airmail post. \$3.00 for all other destinations and these are shipped Airmail or best way.

The articles are first rate, and I love your end-of-article icon. It is so nice to have a magazine with no planes, trains and automobiles. My only complaint is that I have to wait that long three months for your magazine, only to read it from cover to cover the same day it arrives, then the long wait begins all over again.

Have you guys ever thought about starting up a bulletin board? It could be a kind of electronic meeting place for exchanging ideas, and you might also have a for-sale/trade and wanted items section. Just a thought. Keep up the good work.

—Joe Rundell

Thanks to everyone for the praise. We can never hear it too much. Although your editor has increased at least two hat sizes. Boy, do we wish we could publish every month. But right now it is just not fiscally possible. Our next step may be bi-monthly, but that is still down the road a bit. You are now seeing a bit of color herein, so we are taking steps!

As to the bulletin board—excellent idea! The cost of a true BBS exclusively devoted to MMiR would probably waaaaay too expensive for this little venture. However, anyone wishing to have an "electronic" say can contact us directly on Internet. The Editor's handle is: MMiR35701. We subscribe to America Online, but you should be able to reach us through any service that has Internet. Just remember: any correspondence sent by E-mail will be subject to being printed here. If you do not wish to have your E-mail printed, you must state this clearly at the beginning or end of your correspondence. We'll pick the best of the chatter each quarter for this column. If we get enough, next time maybe we'll see Mail Sack go to two pages. Mail received electronically will be identified by this symbol:✉

✉

Got a problem with any of this?

Well write to us, dammit! Send those comments to: *Mail Sack, Military Miniatures in Review, 21045 Commercial Trail, Boca Raton, Florida 33486-1006.*

NOTICE BOARD

We still need Zip-Plus Fours! Everyone gripes about the speed of third class mail (it's bad, we agree), but the extra digits really do help speed it along.

Just call or drop us a card to add the suffix to your records.

We still have a few \$1.10 credits, so if you are about to renew, make sure to bring it to our attention. ☺



Short Takes

A brief walk around the hobby proper.



Book Reviews

Captured American & British Tanks Under the German Flag

by Werner Regenberg
Schiffer Publishing, 1993

Soft cover, B&W with color cover, 48 pages.

CAPTURED AMERICAN & BRITISH TANKS



THIS NEW SOFT COVER BOOK from Schiffer covers the capture and deployment of both U.S. and British vehicles.

There is extensive coverage here of captured Shermans. The Germans were apparently quite fond of it—as they were commonly pressed into service as recovery tractors.

The Germans also seemed to have taken a shine to the British Firefly. There are several excellent shots of these tanks in German hands. The cover painting illustrates one such vehicle completely repainted in dark yellow with green overspray.

Also covered is the extensive exchange of vehicles that took place in the desert battles of North Africa. The accompanying text discusses the units that used captured vehicles and their various uses.

Available locally or direct from Schiffer.

Mechanized Force British tanks between the wars

by David Fletcher
HMSO, 1993

Soft cover, B&W, 130 pages, indexed.

AUTHORED BY DAVID FLETCHER, *Mechanized Force* represents another in the series of "Tank Museum" books published by H M S O (Her



Majesty's Stationary Office—sort of like our Government Printing Office). Mr. Fletcher has been responsible for a number of these titles, and all draw off both his own extensive knowledge, and the vast Tank Museum archive and library.

As its name implies, this volume covers tank development and tactics between the wars. There is a very thorough discussion and illustration of all facets of tank design during this period. Many rare and unusual photos of the Vickers Medium and Matilda Mk. I are featured, along with transport systems, light tanks and armored cars.

In addition to the development histories, there are separate sections on Armored Cars, the Royal Tank Corp's 1920s Indian excursion, the Middle East Conflicts of the twenties, and the export of British technology. Don't forget, license-built versions of various Vicker's machines were built from the Netherlands to the Soviet Union.

The photos (all of which are black & white) are all of exceptional quality and clarity. Very crisp plans of certain vehicles are also included. Anyone interested in scratchbuilding AFVs from this period will find this book especially useful.

We recommend this not only as an excellent reference source, but also as a very interesting read for any armor enthusiast.

This book is available from Squadron Signal Mail Order.

Tiger I

Number 5 in Osprey's
New Vanguard Series
by Tom Jentz, Hilary Doyle
and Peter Sarson
Soft Cover, B&W and color
illustrations, 48 pages.



IT TOOK THREE GUYS TO write this book. Two really. Mr. Sarson's contribution is the illustrations. This title supersedes the earlier work by Osprey—it is not a revision, but rather a

wholly new effort. It is considerably more complete than the first book, with very complete descriptions of the development and deployment of the weapon, as well as a complete technical analysis. Also included is a brief history of all the units that deployed the Tiger I. This would be most helpful to modelers when deciding how to mark their particular model. The photos are fairly numerous for a book of this size, although almost all will be familiar to German armor buffs.

The real reason to buy this book is the illustrations. Several of Mr. Doyle's line drawings are included, as are six brand new color plates by Mr. Sarson. The crowning glory, however, is a superb color cutaway illustration of a Tiger I, again by Mr. Sarson. Color information of the Tiger I interior is a bit scant and this will definitely help fill this gap.

This book is a big bargain when one considers the price of some of the other reference works available on the subject. Those who have the earlier book might still want to add this to their libraries. If you don't have the first book then this one is for you. Available anywhere the Osprey line is sold.

T-72 Main Battle Tank 1974-1993

Number 6 in Osprey's
New Vanguard Series
by Steve Zaloga and Peter Sarson
Soft Cover, B&W and color
illustrations, 48 pages.



THIS NEW BOOK BY MR. ZALOGA is an excellent follow-up to his earlier *Modern Soviet Battle Tanks* in the Osprey series. Mr. Zaloga has incorporated all the latest data on this weapon system. This represents a considerable body of information given all that has come to light in the aftermath of the Gulf War and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

This is not a "nuts and bolts" work. It concentrates on describing of all of the T-72 variants, rather than a screw-by-screw description of any one. All of the variants are discussed, including many of the unusual versions created by the various user nations. Small profile line drawings accompany the text and each contains call-outs noting the most distinguishing features of the various types. Of special interest are several shots of prototype vehicles now on display at the enigmatic Kubinka Tank Museum in Russia.

Rounding out the package are six

original illustrations by Peter Sarson including yet another magnificent cutaway spread. The cutaway is keyed to reference points around the drawing. Another nice feature of all the color illustrations is the addition of unit markings to complement the paint schemes. Hungarian, East German, Rumanian, Russian, Kuwaiti and Iraqi vehicles are pictured.

All this adds up to an excellent overall reference which would be a superb starting point for conversion of either the Tamiya or the DML kit. Available anywhere the Osprey line is sold. Go get it. Are you back yet?

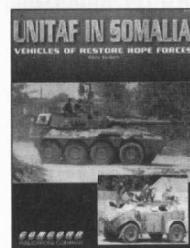
UNITAF in Somalia

Vehicles of Restore Hope Forces

by Barry Bedlam

Concord Publications

Soft cover, B&W and color, 96 pages.



THIS BOOK REPRESENTS YET another in the extensive series of books on modern warfare by Concord. Boy, if you're a modern vehicle fan this book is for you. These 96 pages are crammed with almost every conceivable type of modern soft skin and AFV. All of the participating nations are represented including the United States; Turkey; Saudi Arabia; Kuwait; Botswana; Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan, Canada, France, Australia; Italy and more.

The book is divided into sections, each illustrating a different nationality. Mr. Bedlam has chosen a wide cross section of vehicles to represent. There's a tremendous variety shown for each of the sections. There are also some very unusual and unique vehicles pictured. The Centaur, Italy's answer to the MBT—with wheels instead of tracks, is shown both on the cover and again several times in the interior of the book. Many of the variants of the Canadian LAV (called the Bison by them) are shown, including the ambulance model. There is also a bizarre assortment of wheeled armored vehicles deployed by the smaller nations.

The U.S. section shows several different versions of the Oshkosh prime mover and the M923 Bigfoot moving cargo off the Mogadishu airfield. Many other American items are shown including the M1A1. The wide variety of camouflage and markings among these vehicles is fascinating.

Available anywhere the Concord line is sold. If modern armor is your bag, don't miss this one.

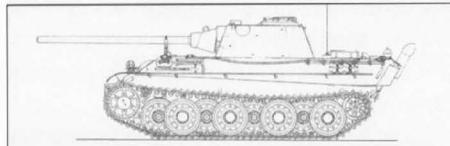
New Products

Take out that second mortgage, here's lots more cool stuff.

Dragon

Stop! Stop! Let us catch our breath! O.K. go... DML continues to announce tons of good junk. A late **Panzer IV J** is on the heals of the L70. It's billed as the first complete J on the market, although no one here can recall ever seeing a J done before. At any rate, this baby promises to be a good'un, with three sheets of photo-etched brass included. We're hopin' for mesh side skirts and turret armor. It will be kit number 6022 and will retail for \$29.98. A great deal.

Over the last couple of months, DML has been waging a "Super Secret" Campaign. They sort of announce a kit, but only give a general idea of what the subject will be. The first of these was kit number 9008. This was originally announced as a mystery kit of a WWII subject. After that, two additional releases were announced under the Top Secret umbrella, carrying the stock numbers 6027 and 9009 respectively. The following information is just becoming available at press time. Kit number 9008 will be the **German Panther F**. This is the vehicle that



is familiar to most with the steel wheels and the "Schmal Turm." Why a Panther so close to the heals of the Tamiya kits? We dunno. We have quickly viewed the kit and it appears to be the Italeri lower hull and roadwheels along with all the new bits to make it into an F model. It includes link-to-link tracks, optional ice cleats for same, steel roadwheels and photo-etched detail parts. All this for \$34.98. Not quite what we were expecting, but still true to the concept of the Imperial line (note the 9-0-0 stock number), in that it is composed of more than one manufacturer's components.

Kit number 9009 indicates another in the Imperial series and it will be an M4A1E8 Sherman. No word yet on the exact composition of the kit.

The last item, number 6027 is a standard DML stock number and it is listed as a **Panther II**. This is another concept vehicle produced near the end of the war. A partially completed example is now on display at Fort Knox. Again, no specific G2 on the model.

In the figure department, we have a

new **German Volkstrum** set on the way. This set will depict the so-called People's Militia of the final days of WWII. The set will apparently represent those characters which were originally depicted on the box top of the Maus. This will be number 6020 and retails for \$6.98.

Also, also is a set of **Red Devils, Arnhem 1944**. Finally! A set of decent 1/35th scale British Paras. We look forward to these with great anticipation. The set should include the usual fantastic weapons and will be most welcome on the scene. Look for stock number 6023 and the normal \$6.98 retail.

For summer release we have **German Infantry of the Hedgerows** (is that like the Vanderbilts of Long Island?). This will be a mixed set of retreating dudes including a Panzer crewman. Set number 6025. A **Delta Force** set is also on the way. This should help make up for the missing special forces vehicle once planned. The set will include four figs and is number 3022.

Fire Force Products

The English company Fire Force Products may be known to some of our readers. They make the Ratel 90 South African Defense Force APC and Mortar Carrier in resin.

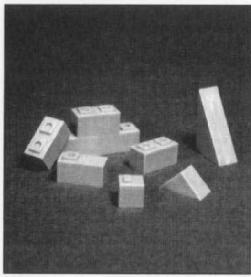
We have recently become acquainted with a new series of their products; 1/35th scale German decals. These represent **German tactical markings** from WWII. Three of each type of marking is supplied in a set, so you can do a complete vehicle and have a single left over for a trailer, the spares box, or in case you goof.

All but one sheet is composed of dry-transfer markings, while the remaining sheet is composed of unique "semi-dry" application decals. This system entails gently rubbing on the marking and then permanently adhering it with water. We don't know if this is the older or the newer of the two systems, but either one worked well.

We presently know of no U.S. agent for these products, but the marking sheets are available directly from Fire Force for \$3.70, which includes air mail post. That works out to approximately \$5.75 U.S. An International Money Order is best for this type of transaction, check with your local bank.

Fire Force also has a **South African G-155mm SPG** due out right about now, along with a **Olifant Mk Ib MBT** in the works.

To order, or for more info contact: Fire Force Products, 783, Yardley Wood Road, Billesley, Birmingham. B13 0JE England.

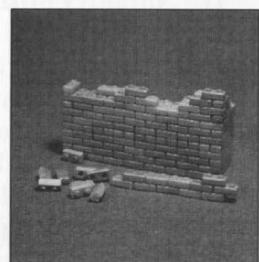


Hansa Plastics, Inc.

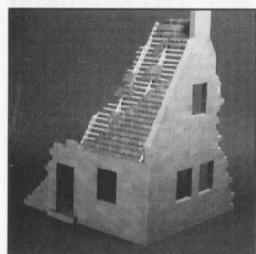
We first became acquainted with Hansa at the 1993 IPMS Nationals in Atlanta.

They were just finishing the development of a very interesting line of injection-molded building materials in 1/35th scale. Well, the product line is now up and running... this could just be the best kept secret in the armor hobby today.

The line is composed of a variety of individually molded pieces such as: bricks, blocks and roof tiles. The secret of the system is that each block and brick contains a small lug on top that corresponds to a hole on the bottom of each piece. What you end up with is a "Lego" type system for building highly accurate scale buildings. Half and corner bricks and blocks are available for the



transitions around windows, doors and roofs. The blocks come with two different types of roof-line blocks; European 60° and U.S. 45° angles.



The larger blocks could be used for big structures or also to serve as a foundation for larger brick buildings. Although, we did see brick structures of substantial size made just from bricks alone.

There are also two different types of roofing tiles: one a pointed type and the other rounded. The tiles are a system of and in themselves. The tiles mount onto lattice type frames, which when placed side by side, form a rafter structure. Cross members run the length of these rafter units and the tiles hang off the cross members. Half tiles dress up the edges.

The entire system is quite amazing. It all represents an considerable amount of time and effort from the manufacturer, and it is all very

well thought out. For instance, all of the materials are molded in a slightly different shade. This creates a very realistic mottled effect across the surface of any structure. Very slight weathering and a coat of flat is all that would be needed to finish it up. The cinder blocks also have a slight variations in their surfaces which creates a very convincing texture across the face of a finished wall.

It appears that whole, un-damaged buildings would be the easiest to create, but the plastic parts can be gouged and broken

with pliers to show battle damage. In that case, the edges could be touched up with putty to emulate broken masonry. It is quite easy to get started. When we got the cinder block in our offices, everyone grabbed a handful and retreated to a corner. Basic, simple structures popped up in 10 or 15 minutes. The ruined building seen the photos was done in around 45 minutes. Larger, elaborate structures would, of course, take longer. This would also be the case with the individual bricks.

This aspect is very tedious, but the results are the most accurate we've ever seen. Another plus is that the buildings have a "scale-strength" to them and are quite sturdy.

You'll need to do some planning in order to use the system, as at least for the moment, the materials are not available in kit form. Rather, you must be your own architect and general contractor. The catalog contains instructions and tips for estimating the amount of materials you may need. But all this leaves you completely in control of the creative process, so sky's the limit!

The materials are relatively inexpensive. For example, one thousand of the cinder blocks can be purchased for \$15.00. It occurred to us that the larger blocks would also be very useful for creating any large, bulky structure. Anything that might eventually be covered up—such as a large hull or a piece of factory equipment, etc.

As you can tell, we're quite excited about this product. We have all grown tired of the same old cookie cutter plaster ruins. The Hansa system represents a real first in the ability for the modeler to make his dioramas truly distinctive.

For a complete price list and other information contact: Hansa Plastics, Inc., 8 South Meadow Glen Road, Kings Park, Long Island, New York 11754.

Hasegawa

In the oddball department (down the hall, right next to the men's room), these guys have released three 1/12th (?) scale caricature figures. The first is a German SS Infantryman; the second is your basic "Dogface" WWII GI and the third is a Japanese Infantryman. All are outlandish, but in spite of the obvious anatomical distortions, the helmets, weapons and other equipment appear to be quite accurate. So conversion or scratchbuilding opportunities abound. Each figure is injection molded and each is priced at \$27.98.

Hornet

The fine range of 1/35th scale Hornet figures is finally represented by a U.S. importer. Marco Polo, known for importing



such products as DML, Kirin, AFV Club and Hasegawa (to name just a few) are now bringing the Hornet line into the states. This should mean better availability in the hobby shops, so don't let anyone at

your local store tell you they're not to be found!

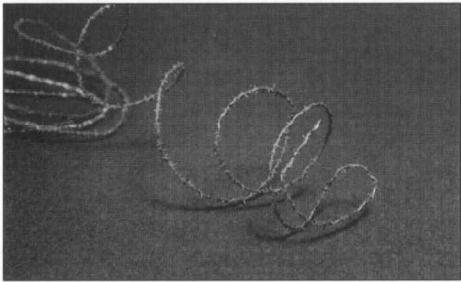
The announced releases for this summer are as follows: Italian Carabinieris WWII (SC06 & SC07); Panzer Grenadier, relaxed pose (GH19); Panzer Grenadier, hands on hips (GH20) and German AFV Crewman w/88mm shell (GH21). In the range of replacement head sets: Bare Heads, African features (HH05); Heads w/Fallschirmjäger Helmets (HGH06); Heads w/Italian Helmets (HIH01) and Heads w/American Helmets (HUH01). SC06 and SC07 are cast in resin with the remaining figures cast in white metal. All of the head sets are cast in resin.

Some of these items are now becoming available. We have already seen the U.S. Helmet and African Head sets (see MMIR #2) and they are up to the usual standards. All of the figures will retail for \$13.50 and the head sets for \$10.50.

Don't forget, Marco Polo is just the importer of the line—they do no retail sales, so check your local hobby shop or mail order outlet for availability.

Hudson & Allen Studio

Yet another new name to us, H&A provided a sample of their new Barbed Wire product. The product is 36 inches of very



intricately woven miniature barbed wire. The strand is woven just like the real McCoy and even comes pre-painted. No scale is given, but it appears that it would be suitable for any setting in the 54mm-1/35th scale range. This item would be just the ticket to spice up a figure base, and the diorama possibilities are vast.

The product retails for \$8.95, which is a very good value considering that it might yield several projects. We don't know about its availability in Hobby Shops, but it may be ordered directly from the manufacturer. Their address is: Hudson & Allen Studio, P.O. Box 82314, Rochester, MI 48307-1571. Dealer and distributor inquiries are welcome.

Italeri

We mentioned last time that we would re-run the release list for these guys, so here it 'tis. Bear in mind that Italeri generally runs a least a few months behind on its new releases. The dates listed are probably when the products will be released to the wholesale distributors. So back them off accordingly.

Reissues scheduled for June are: M32 ARV (\$23.00); White Scout Car (\$20.00); 3/4 ton Truck (\$20.00); and the civilian model of the Opel Blitz in 1/24th scale (\$42.50).



New releases for August are: M-113 A1 APC (\$17.50); Panzerwerfer 42 (\$17.50); M923 A1 "Big Foot" (\$17.00); Soviet JSII (\$23.00); SU-122 Howitzer (\$14.00); and German Tank Accessories (\$9.00).

Continuing the onslaught in December are: Jagdpanther (\$23.00); Ferdinand - Tiger (\$23.00); Leopard II-Improved (\$23.00); Soviet T-34 (\$17.50); and Soviet Naval Infantry (\$9.00).

Our G2 on these items is as follows: The Soviet stuff most likely will be Zvezda produced items like the BT-5. The JSII appears to be the post-war version with the rounded fenders.

The M923A1 is the big post-war U.S. cargo truck. The Panzerwerfer will be based on the Opel Maultier, as it shares the same under-carriage and drive-train. The Jagdpanther is, well... a Jagdpanther—however we don't think that this indicates a late Panther will follow.

The Ferdinand looks like it's going to be the Tiger P; the Porsche prototype version of the famous heavy tank.

The German tank accessories will include a Panzerbusch artillery piece.

MB Models

MB has finally announced the release of its Russian 203mm Howitzer. We originally saw this kit on display at the Chicago Model Show while it was in prototype form. It was quite impressive. We have not received a kit as of this writing, but we have received the photos you see on these pages. The kit looks

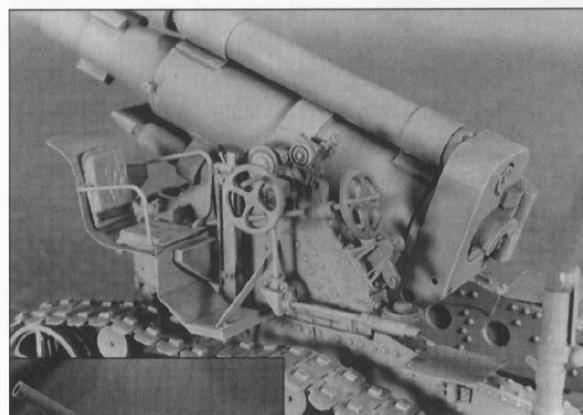


elevation, no less). Its unusual tracked configuration and its huge riveted trail make it a very distinctive looking weapon.

This a "high-tech" multi-media type kit and the word from MB is that it will be composed of over 25 resin parts, 38 white metal parts and a large sheet of photo-etched brass. A xerox copy of the brass artwork was enclosed with the publicity materials we received from MB and the sheet is substantial in size. Look for item number MB-1103 and a retail price of \$115.00.

Also new from MB, is a T-34M conversion kit. The "M" is the postwar version that saw service in Vietnam and the Middle East. This kit is designed for the venerable old Tamiya kit and includes a full set of white metal starfish-type wheels, a resin replacement turret and a new set of resin exhaust covers. The T-34M kit is stock number MB-1110 and retails for \$35.95.

One last item is a new T-62 turret. This resin drop-in replacement turret is the early version and it retails for \$14.00. Look for stock number 1109.



very good... in a word: WOW! This thing looks very striking, not to mention big.

If you're not familiar with this weapon, it's quite often seen firing in some of the newsreels of the battle for Berlin (at zero



September through December: Merkava II; M-163 Vulcan; M-981 FIST V and M-998 Cargo Truck.

But the BIG, BIG news: a British Warrior Mark V APC and... (drum roll please) a M26 Pershing. Both for December release. How

long have we begged for a Pershing?

The prices and precise release dates are all to be announced. We will continue to keep everyone posted in this column on any future developments.

Tamiya

These guys are really keeping a tight lid on their up-and-coming goodies. We have been able to squeeze the following tid-bits from them.

Look for the Steel-wheeled version of the **Panther** to appear on the shelves right about when you get this mag. This will still be the early G, but outfitted with "stahlrollenlaufwerk" (say that ten times real fast). That's steel wheels to you. This is spot-on accurate, as it was the early and mid-



production tanks that were seen in combat with these wheels, rather than the late G. Our hats are off to the T-masters for this observation. In addition to the steel wheels, the kit will also include 3 additional trees of goodies: a suite of IR sighting equipment; ice cleats for the tracks; and a complete set of periscopes for the vehicle. Neato-keeno-cool. These 3 sprues are provided in addition to the regular roadwheels, so it's value city!

Also look for the **late Panther G** this summer. We have no word on what exactly will be in the box, but we will keep you posted.

In July, look for the **British Bren Gun Carrier** to be re-issued, this time as a European-Theater vehicle. The kit will include different markings and a new set of figures that make up a roadside rest stop scene. Apparently, the older figures will still be included so you'll have the option of the two.

The real big news of the summer from Big T is, of course, the **Sturmtiger**. Yep, you read it right, it's that elusive Sturmtiger. This time it's for real. We have confirmed the release of this item directly with Tamiya America. The stock number will be 35177. The kit will include a complete interior. We have

no word on the retail price of the kit as of press time. STAY TUNED...

The Master's Hobby Supply

We have recently received the latest addition to the line of WWII German armor decals from Master's. This latest set is a complete (and we mean complete) set for marking the **German King Tiger tank**.

There are three sheets enclosed and they are quite literally crammed with markings. There are several different types of numbers for marking individual vehicles. Various sizes of red and white, black and white, blue and yellow, and solid blue numbers are all in evidence. Many, many different types of unit markings are also present, as is a highly detailed and informative instruction sheet.

The entire set seems to have been very well researched and it certainly is a bargain at \$10.00. For more information or to order contact: The Master's Hobby Supply, P.O. Box 81484, San Diego, CA 92138-1484.

Verlinden

Once again we wade into the stream and pick out some of the fatter trout (metaphors R us). Among the many goodies being offered by VP and VLS is a new **Tiger I interior set**. Why did anyone wait so long to do this? Well, it's done now. And VP definitely "did it" on this one. The set is composed of a multitude of resin pieces representing what looks to be almost all of the interior components. The side and rear bulkheads, the tranny and driver's station, radio, hull floor, turret basket and even a new gun breech and optics are included. The set also includes a large set of photo-etched material for the radio frame, and various other lids, strips and brackets.

We believe this is a first for an armor kit, in that one can now build a complete scale replica both inside and outside by combining this with their earlier engine compartment. Excellent dudes!

Also in the vehicle range is VP4-924 **Panzer IV Recovery Vehicle** (yes, they were fielded), which should be nice. We assume it will be for the Italeri kit. Also, also is a modern **Armored Ammo trailer**. These were seen behind M1s in the Gulf. The trailer is stock number VP4 924 and it retails for \$32.95.

Look for the another release in the *War Paint* series by VP. This series is a photographic album of work seen at each of the

Euro Militaire competitions starting in 1990. Each volume represents a single year and the latest is of the 1993 show. We have seen the previous volumes and the quality of the photos and the printing is quite high. The standard of the work displayed is also quite high and well worth study. The price and precise release date are to be announced.

VLS is showing a new product line called "Combat Series." This may or may not be the old Cal-Scale line of tools and weapons. The line is made up of many of the same items and all the items are billed as solid cast brass. There was a time when the Cal-Scale stuff was the "cat's-ass" in detail products. Their only draw back being they are listed as 54mm. This usually means 1/32nd scale, but most of the old stuff still looked O.K. on 1/35th scale models. Worth checking into.

For more information contact: VLS, Lone Star Industrial Park, 811 Lone Star Drive, O'Fallon, MO 63366 (314) 281-5700.

Wolf

This is a line of figures that has just recently popped onto the scene. The man behind Wolf was once the other half of the



Hornet team: Nic Adams. Mr. Adams was responsible for many of the cool little accessory items like the British Para Scooter and the various weapons sets. The new Wolf line is composed of both

1/35th scale figures & accessories and 54mm historical figures. The 1/35th scale items are all of WWII subjects, while the 54mm items are mainly American Civil War stuff.

In the WWII line, available this summer, are: British Tankman (WAW01); Soviet Soldier with AT Rifle (WAW02); Belgian Tank Officer (WAW02); German Volstrum (WAW04); USAAF Bomber Crewman (WAW05); German Soldier in Zeltbahn (WAW06); SS Grenadier in Parka (WAW07); German MG 42 Gunner (WAW08) and British Soldier,



wounded (WRP01). We have seen a few of these figures and although the level of quality does not quite equal that of Hornet, they're not bad. Many of the subjects are also very unique. Each of the figures retails for \$18.00 and all are cast in white metal.

Also available in the line are British Small Arms sets A and B, and the aforementioned British Para Trolley (read *scooter*). The Arms set A retails for \$25.00, and the B set and the scooter retails for \$27.00.

What's on the Tubage

Last time around we mentioned **Vintage Video** and their collection of historical tapes. We've had a chance to review two more in the line (this could take a while) and here's a little of what we saw:

War on Wheels. This is a training film from sometime early in the war and it shows a number of American armored vehicles basically tooling around the desert. The quality of the film is very good and you get a lot of good shots of Stuarts, Shermans, half-tracks, jeeps and trucks. It's not combat footage, but the fact that it's not means that the camera dwells on the subjects for a much greater period of time.

The tape is also very entertaining with the goofy 40's style narration and somewhat corny titles.

War on Wheels is part of a four-film series that is all on one tape titled; *Military Vehicles - WWII Volume One*. The other films are: *The Autobiography of a Jeep*; *Troop Train* and *Mortar Jeep*. We think this video is an excellent value for \$29.95.

Little Detroit. Another training/education film, *Little Detroit* showcases the vehicle reassemble yards that dotted the globe during WWII. A couple of different types of U.S. made soft skins are shown in various stages of assembly. If you're a truck fan, you'll enjoy this tape.

Truck Operations in a Combat Zone. Yet another official U.S. Army training film, this one delves into the proper operation of supply trucks and as well the proper conduct of their drivers. This film shows a fascinating variety of trucks and supply vehicles and gives an excellent sense of the enormous Allied logistics machine that functioned during the war. All types of vehicles are shown, from Mack haulers to GMCs, Studebakers, Diamonds and even a M25/M15 Dragon Wagon hauling cargo. Another big hit for truck fans out there.

Little Detroit and *Truck Operations* are both part of Volume Two of the above mentioned series and this tape contains a total of five films. The others are: *Rolling to the Rhine*; *Traffic Control - China, Burma, India*; *Traffic Control - Normandy Invasion*. This tape is also priced at \$29.95.

The Vintage Video catalog is very lively and full of information on the many films offered, as well as information on the Military Vehicle Preservation Association. To order one contact: Vintage Video, P.O. Box 551, 5940 Bino Road, Greencastle, PA 17225. They take both MasterCard and VISA and their customer service number is: 717-597-9695.

Now available from **Questar Video** is Frank Capra's *Why We Fight* series. This set of films was commissioned by the U.S. government during WWII to get folks fired up about entering the war.

The Questar series is composed of three tapes each containing two of the films. The films have a heaping tablespoon of political message and 1/2 cup of propaganda. For example, in *The Nazis Strike* we hear about how the Soviets invaded Poland from the east as a way of stopping Hitler from invading Russia, rather than for their own

designs, as was the case.

In spite of that, all of the films contain a large amount of rare footage—the Polish sequences are particularly interesting. The sample we received did not include pricing information, but we're guessing in the forty-dollar range for the set. For precise information please contact: Questar Video, P.O. Box 11345, Chicago, IL 60611-0345.

Out of production kits at very reasonable prices. Next "old kit list" \$2.00

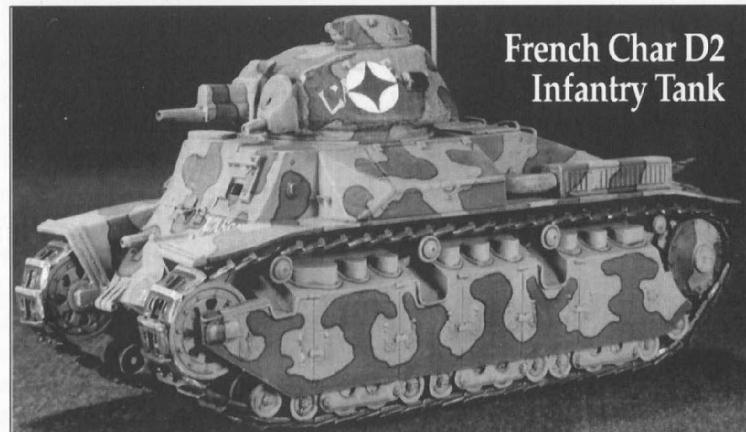
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AFV Club's New T-97 Track

AFV scores a direct hit with this economical and detailed alternative

Modern American armor modelers rejoice! AFV Club has just released an excellent set of link-to-link T-97 tracks. This is the early chevron track utilized on M48's, M60's and M88 recovery vehicles.

This beautifully detailed track set replaces the band-type vinyl tracks currently provided by plastic kit manufacturers—i.e. Tamiya's M48A3, M60A1, and M60A2 Patton kits. Tamiya's M60-A3, and Sergeant York kits provide the more modern T-142 track. ESCI provides the T-142 track, but in styrene, and it builds up in sections rather than link-by-link.

The release of this kit means that we can do away with the old vinyl track which typically suffers from terrible seams along its edges, at times with flash, which because of the nature of the material, often proves too difficult and time consuming to remove.

Contents

This kit consists of six trees of black styrene. Each tree contains a total of 31 individually molded links (track pads) with molded-in guide teeth. A link without guide teeth is also provided. The detail is beautifully executed right down to the bolt head on the guide teeth! Each tree also contains a total of 60 individually molded end connectors, again precisely detailed. If you look carefully you'll see the molded-on detail for the wedge as well as the hex bolt head on the reverse.

On the down side, and this is the only negative thing I found with this kit, each track link suffers from two pin release marks on the inside face which must be sanded off.

Assembly

Assembly is a cinch, and realistically mimics the assembly of the real thing. Each individually molded link (or track pad) has molded-in link pins on its ends, which the end connectors slide into. The tracks are assembled in sections. A series of links are lined up using the center teeth as a guide. Once lined up, the individually molded end connectors, which are precisely spaced on the tree, are inserted into the end connectors. I found no difficulty in accomplishing this.

The genuine article stored as spares in Quantico, Virginia. In this photo you can see the bolt detail in the center horn and the end connectors—both are evident in the AFV Club tracks.



All photos by Jose Ramos

The only tricky part here is to keep the individual track links level and flat while inserting the end connectors. To accomplish this, I placed a straight edge down over one half of the track to keep the links flat during the process. Once the end connectors are in place, the process is repeated on the opposite side. This creates a movable track that is held together by its end connectors which can then be easily wrapped around the wheels and drive sprockets.

Although the instructions recommend working with sections of 4 links, I had no difficulty in assembling longer sections up to 31 links in length (a total of one tree). This works better especially on the long top and bottom track runs.

Even after I had the tracks assembled in sections, I left them attached to the trees. I didn't cut them off until I finished sanding off the pin release marks. The trees help to keep the tracks steady during sanding. I found it easier to sand long sections of tracks rather than many short sections.

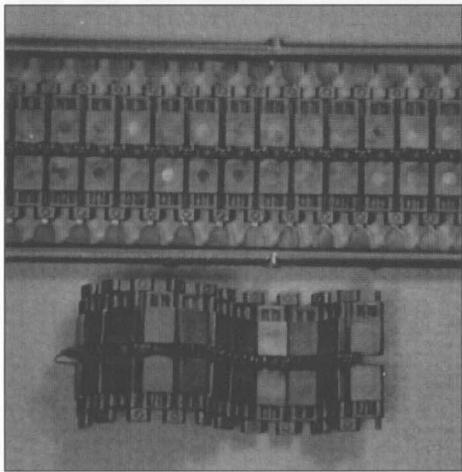
Sanding and removing these pin release marks wasn't difficult to do since the styrene is fairly soft. I lightly scraped the links with the end of an X-acto blade and followed with light sanding from a sanding stick.

The Fun Begins!

At this time you can cut the tracks off their sprue trees. You will find that the end connectors fit on the link pins snugly enough so that the tracks can tolerate a fair amount of play and articulation (hence their name 'workable') without them coming loose.

If the model is not to be articulated over rough diorama terrain, four track sections will be required, two long flat sections for the top and bottom track runs, and two curved sections for the rear drive sprocket and front wheel. The curved sections were formed around the suspension and liquid cement brushed along the end connectors to hold their shape. Real vehicles exhibit fairly well tensioned tracks, without excessive sag. However, the beauty of these tracks is that because they are articulated, you can inflict any amount of sag or bend on them that you desire. Once you obtain the look you want run liquid cement on the insides of the end connectors to help hold the shape.

Don't cement the end connectors on the first and last track links until final assembly, this allows you to disassemble the track (by simply pulling off the connectors) for painting and weathering. During assembly, I used White-Out to mark those specific connectors which weren't glued. To prevent



the tracks from moving, I tacked them on to the wheels and return rollers with small drops of super glue.

Conclusion:

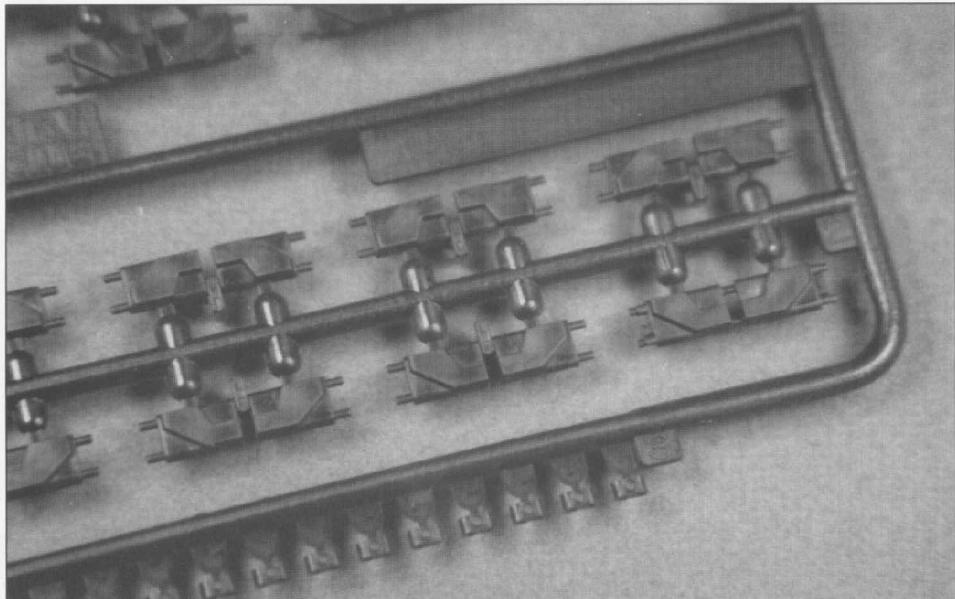
The styrene medium is excellent, easy to work with, and allows you to very easily inflict battle and wear damage (gouges, knicks, etc.) with a Dremel tool or an X-acto blade.

Since the tracks can be articulated, the possibilities for dioramas are enormous. How about depicting a tank with a thrown track? A repair depot with stored coiled tracks? A tank crew installing tracks on to their mount? Or just simply articulating these tracks over rough terrain?

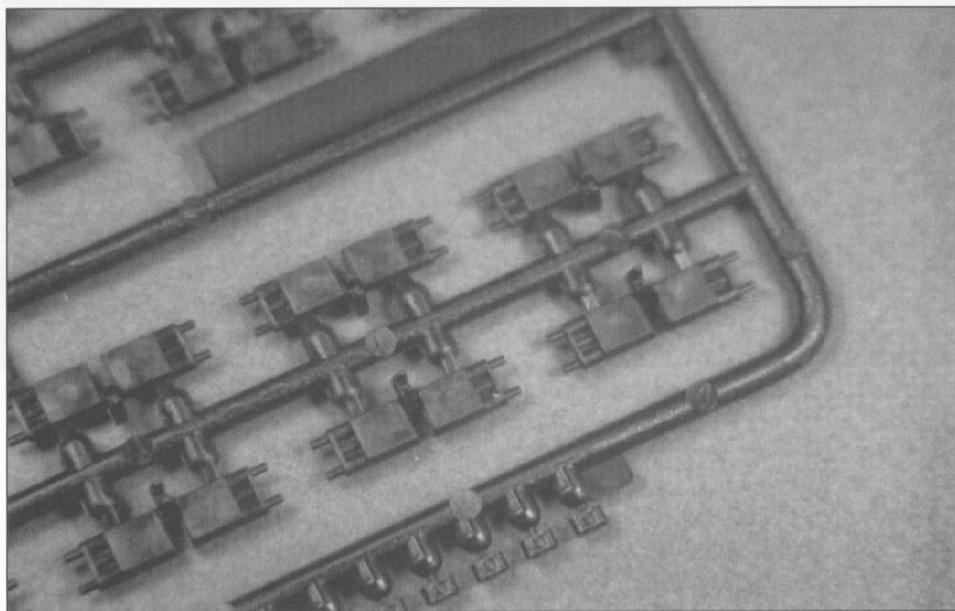
This very simple but effective track connection system lends itself to most U.S. (as well as many other countries) armored vehicle tracks. Do I dare dream of other possible releases by AFV Club? How about modern T-142 tracks, M-47 tracks, or M-1 tank tracks. How about a set of VVSS rubber and steel tracks or HVSS rubber tracks for Sherman junkies? Tracks with or without duck bills? All these would simply be a variation of a theme. I certainly hope that AFV Club hears my cries and provides us armor modelers with additional track sets. All-in-all, I feel that AFV Club has an outstanding product at a very reasonable price. I highly recommend them to all.

—*Jose A. Ramos*

Editor's Note: the price of this set certainly raised a few eyebrows around here. Why are other link-to-link tracks so much money when this fine set retails for only fifteen bucks? Could it be that the good 'ol free market system has finally "corrupted" the cost of these items? Does anybody out there have any ideas?



Above left: the completed runs with the sprues still attached and a finished section. Above: the links as they come from the box, in this case, the bottoms of the links. Below: the same view from the top. If you look closely, you can see the only flaw in the kit: faint knock-out marks on the track faces. This is inevitable in any plastic kit. In both photos, note how the end connectors are located on the outside of the sprues.



MMiR RECCE

AFV Club M48 & M60 Tracks (Workable) Link By Link T-97 Tracks. Purchased from Orange Blossom Hobbies, Miami, Florida. Price was \$14.98 plus local tax.

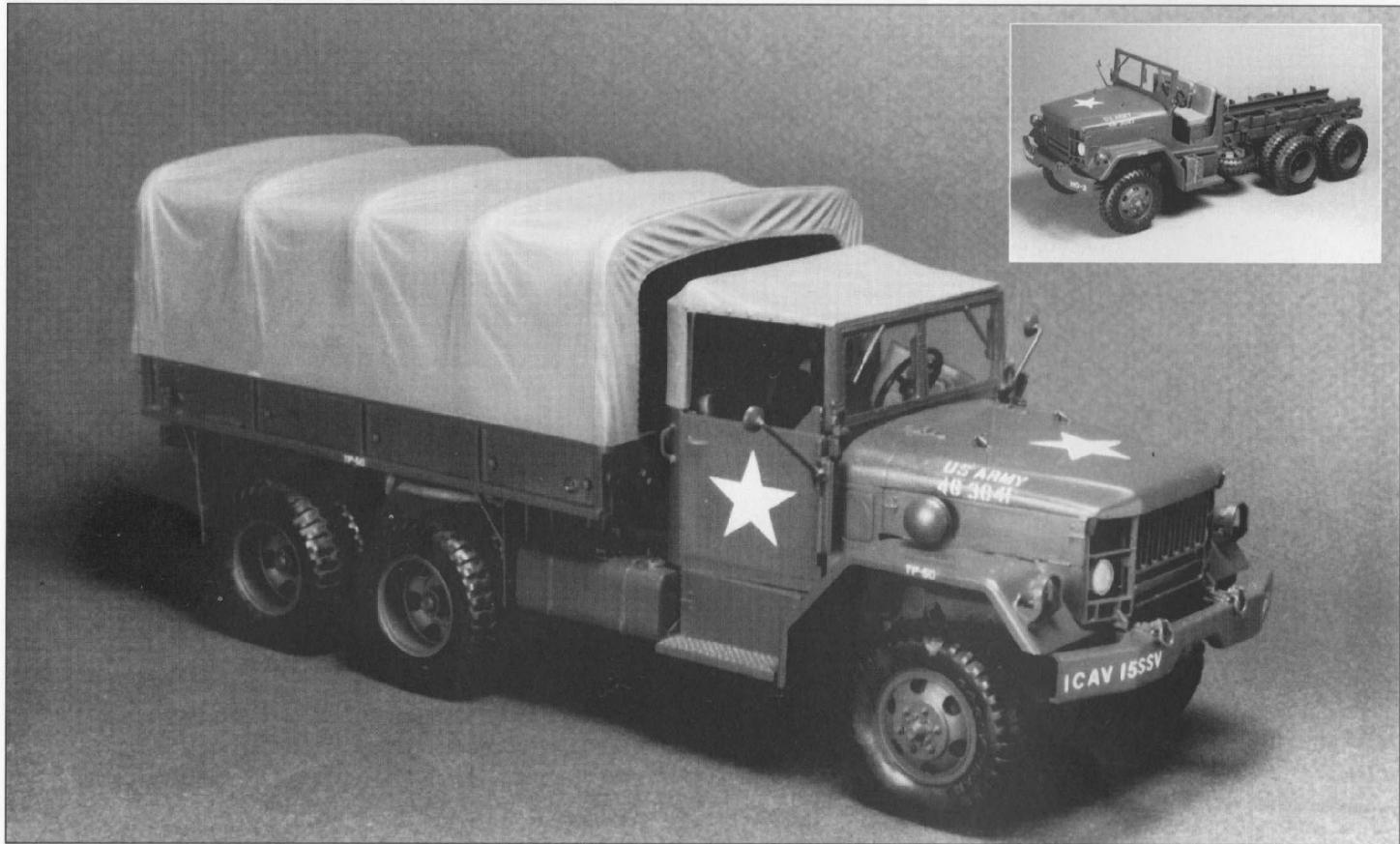
References

M48 in Action, Squadron Signal Publications. Good inexpensive reference on the series. Contains all kinds of photos of the vehicles in the field. Available wherever the *In Action* series is sold.

Patton, History of the American Medium Tank. By R.P. Hunnicut. The big show in research on the M46, 47, 48 and 60 series of tanks. Discusses and lavishly illustrates all the variants and models. Very comprehensive, and a must if modern U.S. armor is your bag. It'll set you back though, the price hovers around a hundred bucks or so. Available through a variety of sources, check Squadron Signal Mail Order or your local bookseller.

Deuce-O-Rama

Back-dating and reviewing the AFV Club M35 2.5 ton truck



Above: the Deuce all buttoned up. Inset: the truck totally topless.

My initial reaction to this kit was one of pure joy that the venerable "Deuce and a Half" M35 6x6 truck was now in a real kit. No more would I have to convert the old Monogram "Eager Beaver" M44 to get this very important version.

AFV's kit does the last incarnation, the diesel A2 with late "NATO" turn signals and minor upgrades. Looking in the box made me come to the following conclusion: because of the detail and the subject chosen, AFV CLUB is rapidly becoming my favorite kit company.

This kit has a lot of parts and options are given to add the front winch assembly and the .50 cal gun mount if you so desire. The level of detail is very good: this is the best 2.5 ton truck of any vintage on the market. Building it as a Desert Storm vet is easy, because about ninety-five or more percent of

the truck is right here in the box. Adding stuff means adding cargo, since almost nothing was left off the molds. I decided to see how hard it would be to backdate to the Vietnam version (the M35A1—but note that the M35 and the M35A2 also served in that war). Should be simple, all I needed to do was modify the exhaust and backdate the turn signal assemblies. Yea, right.

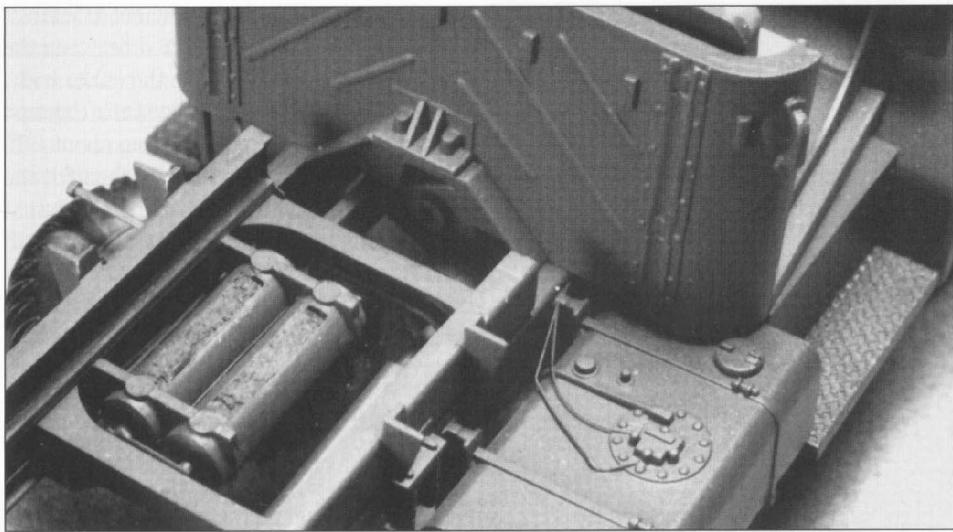
The fit is the best I've seen on any kit and the model builds easily, providing you do a lot of test fitting and plan your attack properly. Don't assume you have to follow the instruction's building sequence since it has a couple of steps out of order in my opinion. Flash is minimal, parts cleanup easily, only a few ejector pin marks cause problems, and there are only a couple of dimples to fill. However, it is not an easy kit to build because of the truck's basic complexity. If it is your first truck, please

take your time. I wouldn't recommend it for beginner modelers, but they ought to buy one and throw it on the closet shelf until they feel up to tackling this beauty. Experienced modelers should have no problems.

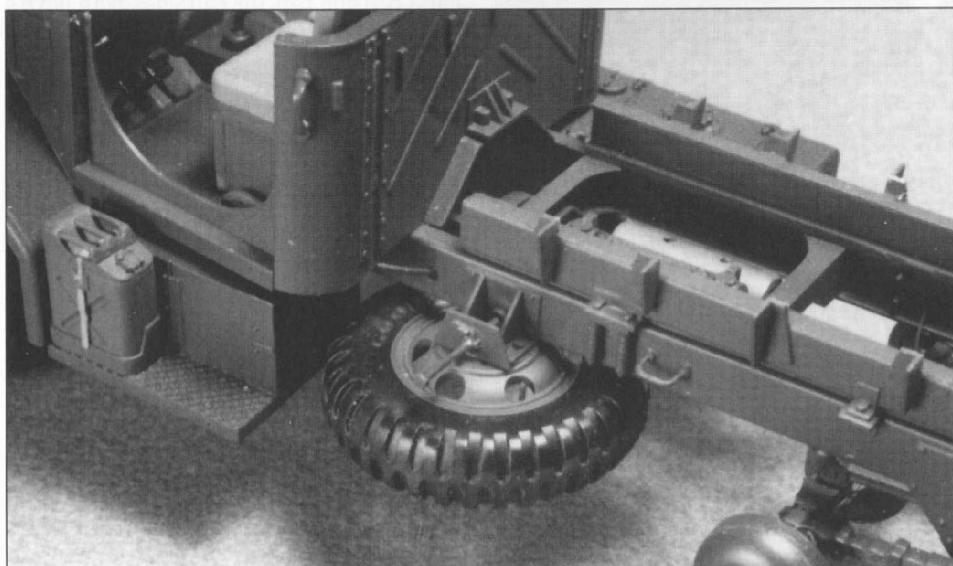
Altered States

In my altered construction sequence, I started by building the frame as in step 1. Note that parts A44, the frame tie-down rings are for modern A2 versions. For a Vietnam version, you should replace these with staple-shaped grab handles made from bent wire. Take care with parts 43 and 42, the spare tire mounts, because they can be wrongly placed.

The two parallel round bars molded on the frame rearward of the tire mount, and on the right side rearward of the gas tank mount are springs. Either scribe these with a sharp knife or replace with springs from the



The rear of the cab and the compressed air tanks and the fuel tank (lower right). Note the electrical leads attached to the fuel tank.



The spare tire mount at the left front of the frame. The Empty wheel hub is visible at lower right.

spares box. Part A60 comprises both compressed air tanks. These have holes molded on top but they cannot be seen when the cargo body is attached. Fill them if you feel the need. Part A61 is the brake hydraulic cylinder and its location can be missed if you are not careful. I resorted to the TM for the truck, but if you have a WWII Italeri Deuce kit then look where they put it: it's in the same place on modern M35 trucks.

In step 2, take care with the placement of parts A34 making sure to examine the top view drawing. Reversing the "short" and "long" sides will screw up the suspension mounting later on. I chose to finish the frame rail assembly before I put the axles and other suspension parts on. I also skipped ahead to Step 4 to build the frame end parts (subassembly IV) and added these to finish the frame. Step 5 shows the end parts installation, but be careful since you can

misplace them and push them too far into the back of the frame rails. Follow this sequence and you'll get a better fit of parts. This way, you can make sure the frame is square, and the suspension will go on easier. Resist the urge to follow AFV Club's assembly sequence at all costs. It will produce a badly aligned suspension. The sequence I used was frame, springs, axles and drive shaft, and then the suspension arms (parts A13 and A14). Finish the rear suspension before going on to the front one in the next step. Brake lines are not provided—not unusual. I added these with copper wire bent to shape.

Step 3 is the front suspension and no problems were encountered. I added brake lines here as well.

Step 4 covers details of the front suspension and I can recommend that you attach part A24 to the front left axle hub (part A67) first. Then attach part A23 to the

chassis frame, and only then connect both with part A30 the steering arm. Parts A51 are the supports for the front fenders so make sure you test fit the fender assembly before these dry at the wrong angle.

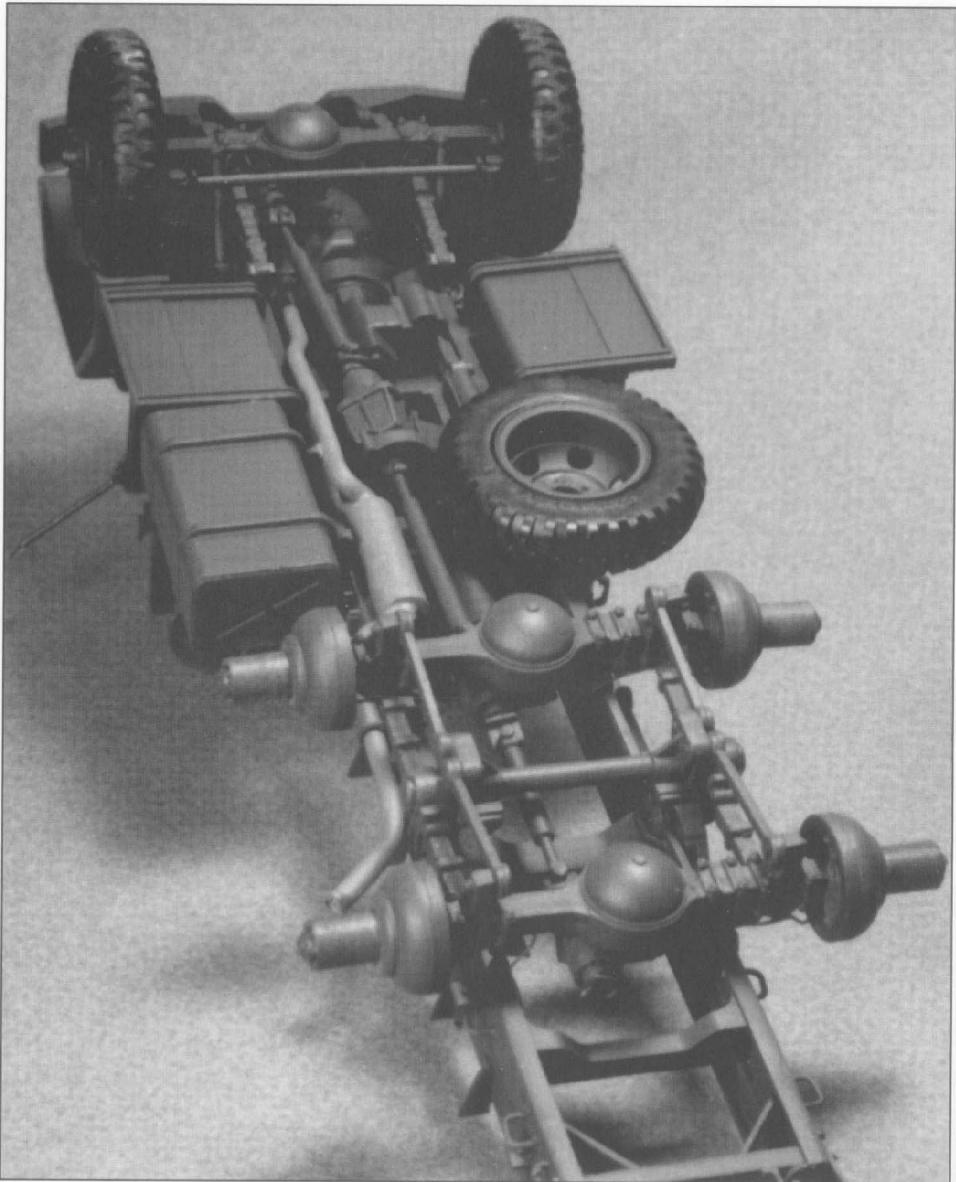
Step 5 covers the rear frame details most of which should already be assembled using my suggested sequence. The bumper parts can be mis-aligned a bit so be careful. Parts B18 are the taillight mounts. These are correct for this version, but for Vietnam trucks you will have to leave these off since the rear light assembly was different and located at the bottom of the cargo bed instead. The taillights are the modern style combination blackout light and turn signal. Vietnam trucks used the 60's version blackout markers. These can be had by taking a set from an M-113 kit or similar model, and some photo-etched after market kits include lens rings for them. I modified the large kit ones to look like the older items.

Step 6 covers the wheels and tires. The wheels do not have valve stems but are very good otherwise. So are the tires and they even include brand markings on the sidewalls. Be very careful with the glue on the wheel hub/brake housings if you want the wheels to roll. Too much will freeze the hubs and too little will not give the proper strength. Do not mount the wheels at this point since you still have to paint the truck. You can put them on later. I made valve stems from more copper wire.

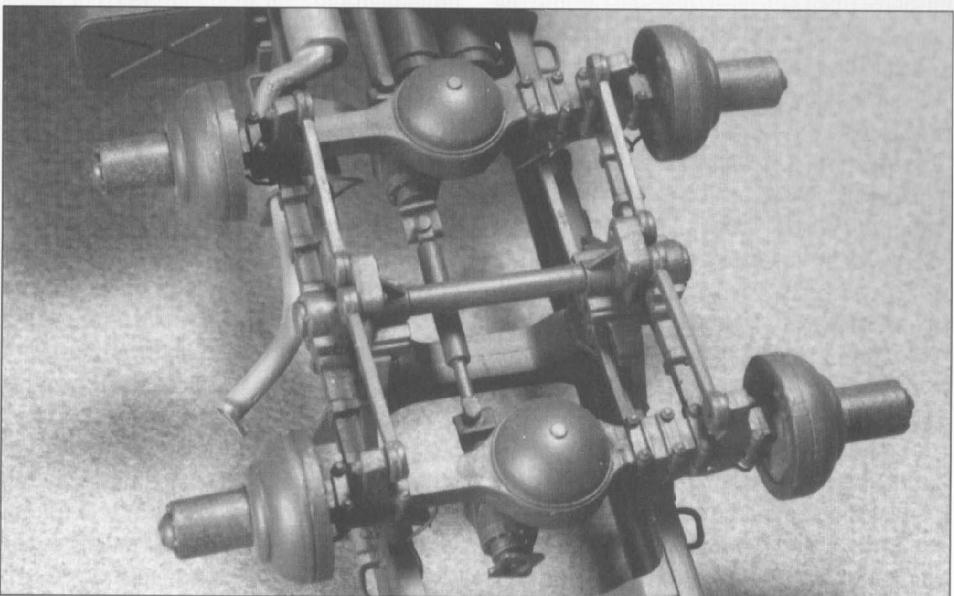
Step 7 covers a number of front end details. The transmission is in two parts and it is too bad that at this price the entire engine wasn't given. All we get is the oil pan and a hang down oil filter. I added two prominent oil/hydraulic lines in front of the oil pan, again using wire.

You have to choose whether you want to use the winch or not. The winch is nicely detailed, though it would benefit from a couple of connecting lines, and it should have the clutch operating lever sticking out the front right side. The large device at the rear end of the winch driveshaft (part A25), is the power takeoff unit. If you decide not to install the winch, then you need to cut off the power takeoff and glue it to the side of the transmission. All trucks have this item installed even if the winch is not. To do my early truck, I left the winch off.

Step 8 is simple and comprises the exhaust extension pipe and front fender assembly. For an early Vietnam truck, the exhaust ran back under the frame to a muffler mounted beside the air tanks and then exited out the right side into a pipe that



The finished and painted frame, minus the bed and the rear tires. This shows off AFV Club's handy work well. If you look close you can see the various brake lines.



Close-up of the rear trans-axes. The wheels fit neatly over the hubs very much like the real thing. The added brake lines are also evident in this photo.

ran behind the front rear wheel assembly. The flanged outlet was located between the right rear wheels up under the cargo body. The kit gives the later-style stack exhaust which was used in Vietnam from about 1970 on. If doing the earlier version, then fill the hole in the front fender for the exhaust extension and discard part B35. If you built the frame and transmission properly, then the fender assembly will fit on the front frame perfectly.

Above The Waist

Step 9 covers the cab parts including the floor, doors, and seats. Here again I deviated from AFV's assembly sequence and built the entire cab including the hood and front grill. I left off the seats for later detailing and to ease painting, and likewise the cab doors. Parts B25 and B26, the cab sides, both have a dimple on the vent door and you need to get the filler putty to work here.

When you put the grille (part B37) on, save the photo etched screen for later, and the headlight lenses can also wait until most of the painting gets done. Add the hood (part B14) and the dashboard (part B44) and the steering column, part B10. Leave off the steering wheel for now so that you can get in the cab and do your detail painting. Part B34 is the mount brace for the exhaust stack, so test fit the stack to make sure it is placed right. The brace can be discarded if you are backdating the truck to the older exhaust system.

The cab interior is correct for a multi-fuel M-35 truck. If you decided to backdate to the old gas engine version, be advised the dashboard layout will have to be changed to make such a conversion correctly. Since the multi-fuel engine was introduced in Vietnam in the mid-60's, a Vietnam truck conversion doesn't have to require such a change. I added the engine starter pedal to the floor. This is a small pedal, slightly larger than the dimmer switch (provided in the kit) but located above and to the left slightly of the gas pedal. This was pushed by the driver using his boot toe to start the truck. On the dashboard, I added the missing throttle lever to the left of the steering column and under the column, I added the filter indicator assembly which is missing from the kit. This is a small cylindrical device that hangs down below the column right next to the dashboard. I punched out some Waldron aircraft (eek!) instruments to add to the panel once the painting was finished. The cab doors have 5 ejector pin marks on each and these are a bitch to remove without

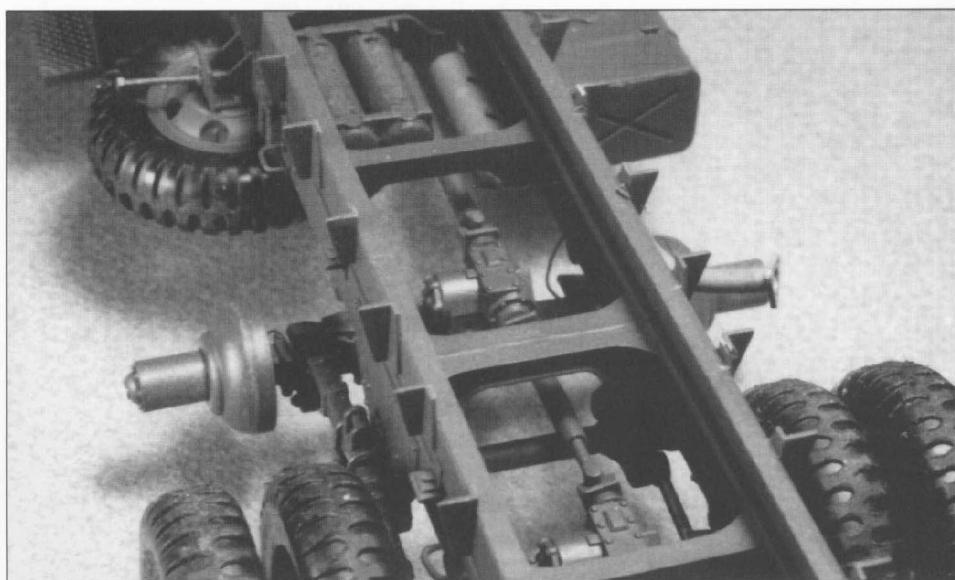
loosing the nice window crank handle details molded inside. These are the only bad ones in the whole kit and they are a bit hard to see if the cab is built closed up. Since the doors can be posed open, you'll have to decide how to deal with this problem.

The seats are good, but the drivers seat has a sink mark in the bottom cushion. You can fill this or use a router bit on the Dremel tool to give it an aged and saggy effect. Put the seats in after the floor is painted. The radiator grill and light box assembly, part B38 is nicely done, but be sure to glue it to the fender assembly and not to the grill or hood. The cab parts including the grill should be able to slide over the radiator after the cab is finished.

I went a little nuts and used my IBM clone to scan in the data plates from the Tech Manual and shrink them down to 1/35 scale. I then printed them on a laser printer and cut them off the page and white glued them to the dashboard. A lot of tech and work for a small improvement. Not to worry, you don't need a computer, since the kit decal sheet includes a less complete set of data plates that are correct for the later A2 trucks.

Vietnam vintage trucks without the winch, for the most part, had the headlights mounted in a lower position. The position given in the kit is correct for the modern Deuce regardless of whether a winch was installed. I decided to modify back to the old set-up so before I mounted the radiator, I cut the light assemblies carefully from the radiator proper and after cutting and re-gluing put the lights in the lower position. This also required moving the divider bar on the grill to keep from blocking the lights. This can get a bit tricky so be careful if you try it. Since the M-35s used at the end of Vietnam did away with the lower light position, you can still do a 'Nam truck without this hassle if you check your references.

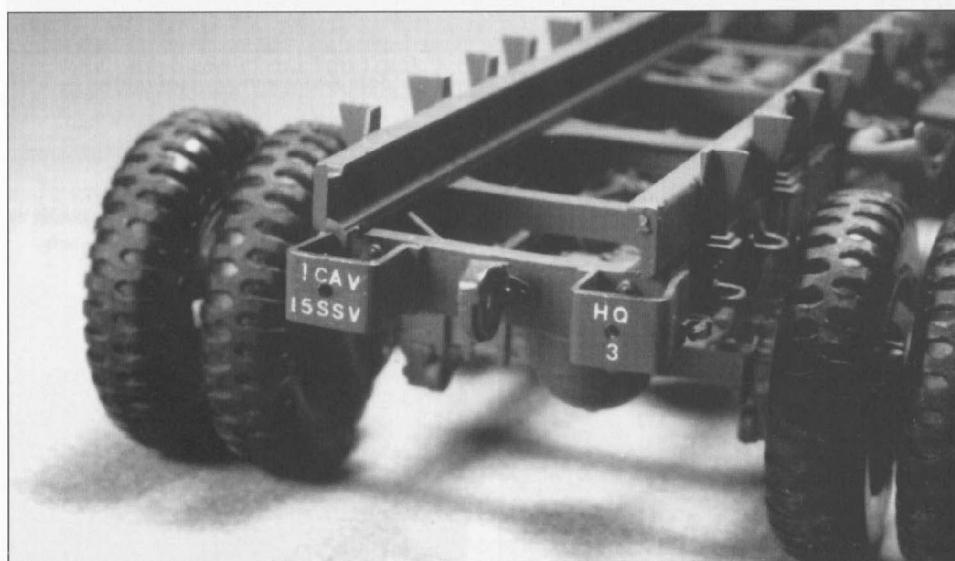
I skipped Step 10 since I wanted to finish the rest of the truck before I messed with the simulated canvas parts. Also the window glass and windshields should be put off until painting is finished. You can add the tool box (subassembly VIII), the battery box (subassembly IX), and the gas tank (subassembly X) when ready. Line up the gas tank carefully, and consider adding two electrical leads running from the round detail on top over to the vehicle frame rails under the cab. Add the rest of the cab details as shown in Step 11. Part B48 is the engine air filter cover as found on all multi-fuel Deuces. Gas only trucks did not have this filter, so it can be considered a recognition feature. The



The top of the trans-axle assembly and more of that excellent AFV Club molding work.



The right side frame and rear tires. The double rail frame is evident as is many of the small details along the inside frame. The wheels and tires were very nice. The valve stems were added with wire.



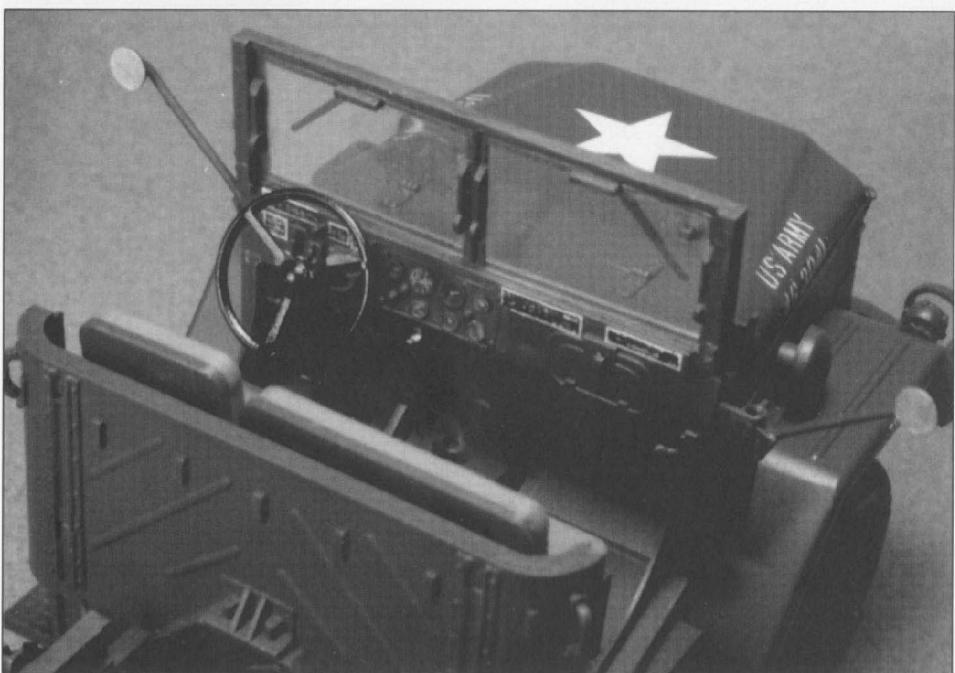
The back bumpers. The markings are for a Service and Supply company truck attached to Headquarters of the 1st Cavalry Division in 1965. A picture of this truck can be found in Shelby Stanton's, Vietnam Order of Battle. I had to scrounge around to put all the white stencils together.



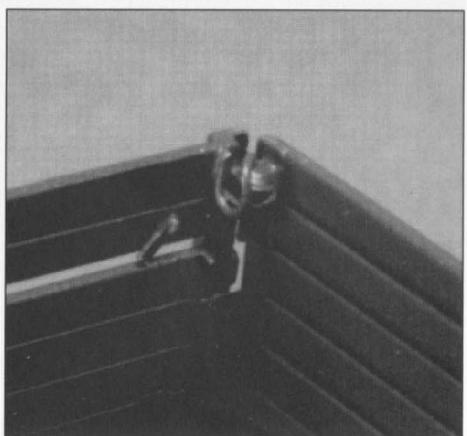
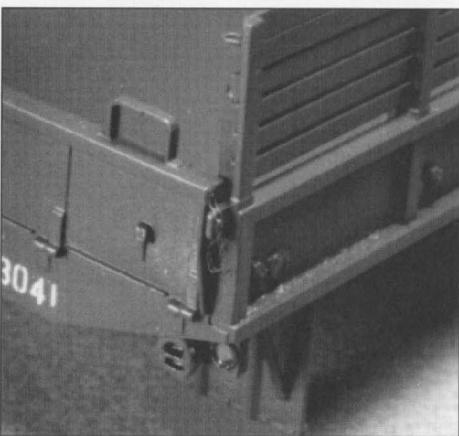
The front end of the M35 showing more of those pilfered markings.



Detail of the front windshield hinges.



The cab interior. The instrument faces are Waldron and the data plates were scanned into a computer, then reduced to 1:35th scale.



Some of the extra detailing accomplished on the truck bed. Left, the right corner of the bed. Right: the upper left corner of the cargo compartment.

exhaust stack provided includes a nice photo etched screen part that must be curled up and wrapped around the stack. This is nicely done. Hate to say my version of the truck didn't use it.

The second page of step 11 covers the optional .50 cal MG gun mount. This is well done and a shame not to use, but many trucks did not have the gun mounted. If you decide to leave it off, be sure to fill the mounting holes in the cab back plate. Also part B20 is used when the gun mount is not used and this should have a hole on top where the mount support tube would insert in this part. I used a drill bit in a pin vise to solve that.

Step 12 covers the rest of the cab detail and these parts can be added when you are ready. I left the mirrors off until painting was done, and for a Vietnam truck I backdated the turn signals (part B19) to the older blackout lights. Make sure you mount the jerrycan and rack as shown. Reversing the direction of the can will cause the can rack to be mounted backwards.

Step 13 shows how to construct the cargo body. Note that there are some subtle dimples in the cargo bed, part C1, that need filler if you intend to leave the floor exposed. Since I was going to put a load of 55 gallon drums in the back, I didn't have to fill these dimples. Part C5, the bed endplate has two reflector lights molded on it that should be removed if you are going to backdate the lights the way I have. The reflectors on the Vietnam trucks were mounted on the taillight assembly next to the blackout lights. At the rear of the cargo bed, note that there should be two small brace rods running from the bed side walls to the bed floor just forward of the tailgate, part C4. If the tailgate is down, the braces can be seen right below the rear end of the troop seats.

Decide if you want the troop seats down or not since either position is possible. If you

stow the troop seats along the side frames then you should still use parts C2, the seat supports, but they should hang limply from the seat frame rails. The kit instructions wrongly imply that the supports are only used if the seats are mounted in the down position. I mounted the tool frame, part B46, last but I left the tools off until I painted the entire truck.

Now you can go back and finish adding the details postponed from earlier steps. The photo etched grill screen (G1) is used on modern trucks but was not used in Vietnam. Make sure you cut it properly (see page 9 of the instructions) if you have installed the winch (AFV Club, in mild state of dementia, calls the winch the 'Lapstab' for some reason in case you are a bit confused). Parts F3 are the cab side windows. You can leave these off if you want to show the windows down. You could also cut them partway and install them in the partially open position which is what I ended up doing.

The canvas roof for the cab is nicely molded to look like tight fabric. However you should consider adding the support frames on the inside since these would be visible from the door windows. Also the canvas is tied down to the back of the cab by a cord which is not detailed in the kit. Adding a simulated chord is straightforward even if it is a bit time consuming. I did this after the photos were taken for this article.

The canvas cover for the cargo bed is also nicely molded. It does include simulated support bow detail on the inside and this is a first for any ragtop kit I've ever seen and a sign of how thorough AFV Club's mold makers were. Once again, if you use this part, you should add the tie down cords around the sides and ends that keep the canvas on the real truck. Since I wanted to show off a cargo load, I left mine off at the end of construction. Last but not least, put the wheels and tires on.

As I already mentioned, the decal sheet includes cab data plates but for some reason does not give instrument faces. Markings schemes provided include a truck from the Republic of China (Taiwan); a truck from HQ Company, 312th Military Intelligence Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division in Desert Storm; and a truck from HQ Company, 2nd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, probably in Germany. The R.O.C. truck is overall olive drab, the Desert Storm truck is sand overall, and the 3rd Infantry truck is in the three tone scheme of Forest Green, Brown, and Black. My truck is painted in the Vietnam shade of dark olive-

drab using my own mix of Floquil colors, and the markings are for a Service and Supply company truck attached to Headquarters of the 1st Cavalry Division in 1965. A picture of this truck can be found in Shelby Stanton's big book, *Vietnam Order of Battle* where it is seen with a load being transferred out of a CH-47 Chinook. I had to scrounge around to put all the white stencils together. Hooray for a well stocked scrap decal box.

I left my truck unweathered for its photo session. Our fearless editor was intrigued with showing a normally grungy truck in its pristine state. I'll admit it's novel, although I have since muddied it up to show typical Vietnam wear and tear.

I Want More Now, Please

The instruction sheet shows the Shop Van version of the Deuce (M109A3) as a

future release but I've been told the next release will be a fuel truck (M49) version. Good! Kirin has a conversion kit out that mounts one type of armor plate and weapons found on Vietnam trucks doing "Thunder Runs." Also they are planning other conversions including the Maxim quad-50 cal gun turret, and possibly even the crane as found on the M60 wrecker and M108 portable crane versions of the Deuce. These would be good also, so bring them on. Now if someone would just make it easier to convert this truck back to that time frame. The horror...the horror—oh never mind.

Buy this truck, keep these people in business. Please! 

—Pete Harlem



MMiR RECCE

AFV Club M35A2 2 1/2 Ton Truck. Kit Number 35004. Purchased from Orange Blossom Hobbies, Miami, Florida. The list price was \$39.98 plus local tax.

References

A single reference source for Vietnam era Deuces is tough to come by. All of my reference was gathered piece-meal from a variety of sources. Most books on Vietnam equipment contain a shot or two of a Deuce. Here's what's out there that I can put a name on:

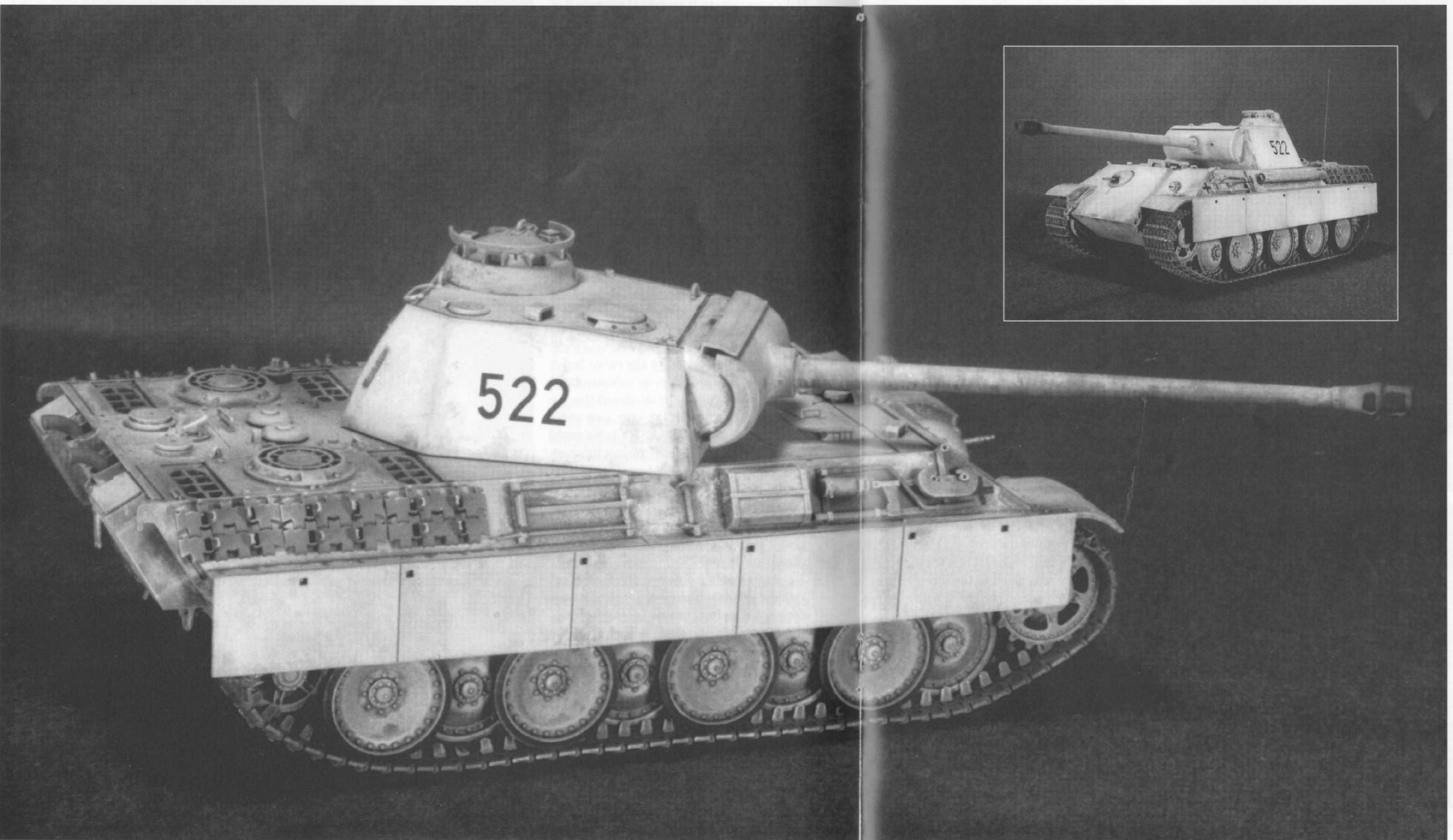
USAREUR: United States Army in Europe, by Michael Jerchel. Concord Publications. This book has several nice shots of modern NATO M35's. Along those lines, you might also want to check out some of the Desert Storm videos for a glimpse of present day trucks.

Department of the Army Technical Manual TM 9-2320-209-10

The dee-luxe way to go when detailing or converting any model. I was fortunate enough to obtain a copy of this manual, dated February 1965, which covers all the variants then in service. It even includes the shop van and the wrecker versions. It will be hard to find, check your local library or perhaps someone in your local club can put you on the trail. I have heard that the Government Printing Office in Pueblo, Colorado can sometimes be of assistance, as long as you come armed with the exact TM number and date—which you now have.

Cat Scratch Fever

Tamiya knocks our socks off with its brand spankin' new Panther G



Like a bolt from the blue, Tamiya follows it's all new Tiger II kits with an all new Panther ausf G. Apparently, Tamiya has decided to reenter the plastic kit market and they are playing to win.

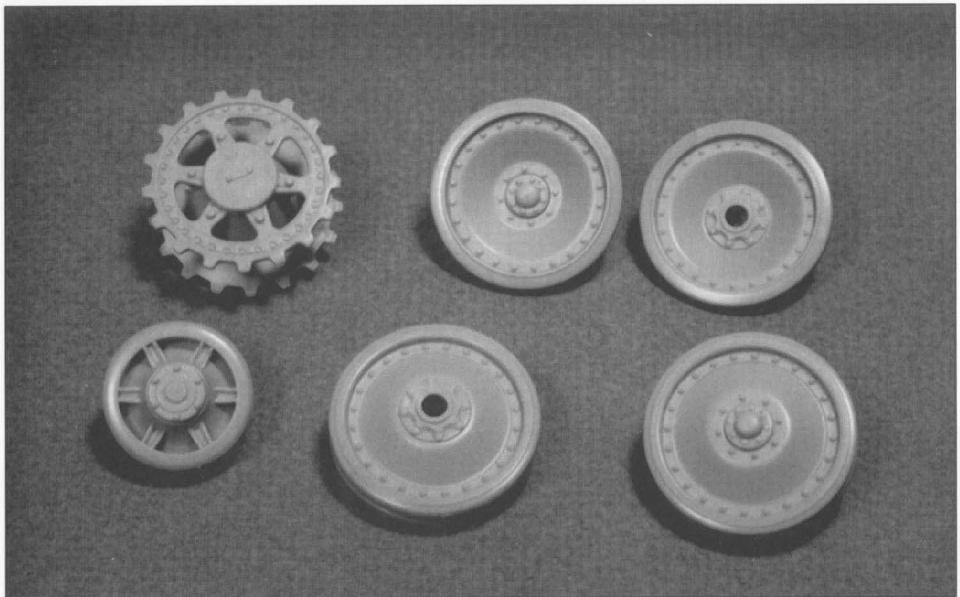
The new Panther surpasses even the recent Tiger kits in attention to detail and engineering. Detail is taken to new levels of subtlety and intricacy. Engineering seems to have been done by a modeler who knew what a Panther was supposed to look like. I'll cover all the good stuff as we get into it.

The kit represents an early-middle Ausf G. Distinguishing features include late-type armored driver's periscope cover, small engine deck grilles, as well as an early style mantlet without the deflector lip and the left ventilator fan cover without the cabin heater unit. However, the way the parts are laid out indicates that the late style kit will be coming soon.

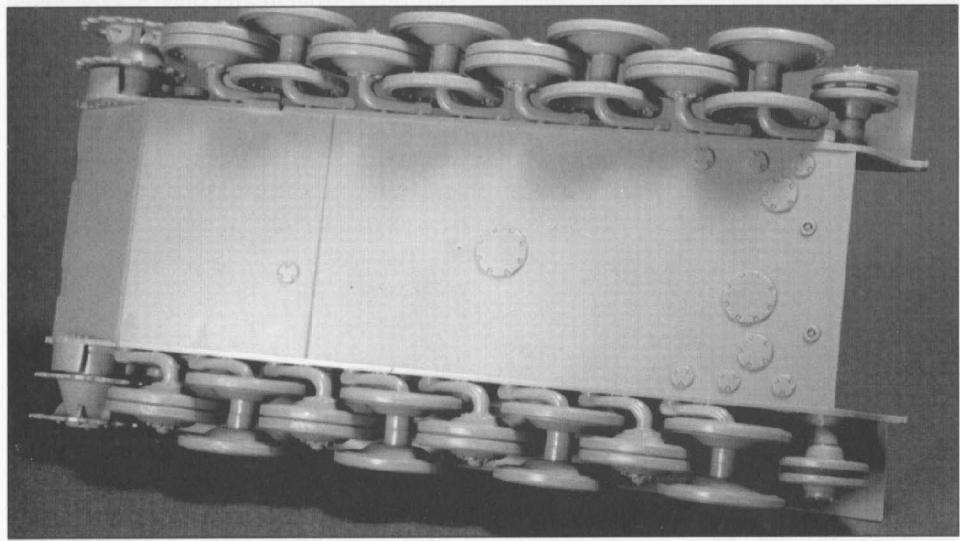
Das Turret

Constructing the model began with the turret which, like the Tiger II kit, contains a basic interior. The turret floor (like the real vehicle) is inset rather than meeting flush with the bottom of the sides. It contains a small seat which the commander can stand on. The gun contains a basic breech mechanism and is attached to the mantlet with a screw and bolt. This allows the gun to remain tight without the usual wear down experienced in plastic parts. This gun will have plenty of staying power.

The mantlet and it's cover exhibit some great work. The mantlet (look closely) has two circular casting marks as the real one did. Some may mistake them for mold seams, but they are Krupp's mold seams not Tamiya's. The shield above the mantlet was also a pleasant surprise. The real thing was constructed of sheet metal and was very thin. I thought that only a photo etched part could match it's dimensions. Tamiya's engineers cheated plastic and beveled the



Above: the major suspension components. Clockwise from upper left: the drive sprocket; the outer wheel; the very most inner wheel, front and back views of the "wheel sandwich," and the idler wheel. Below: the drive sprocket housing assembly. Note the textured surfaces on the parts. Very nifty.



The belly of the beast. All the drain plugs and access holes are right where they should be. Check out that very sexy completed suspension.

part's edges. It's thick like plastic in the middle, but it's almost brass thin on the edges. Tamiya uses the same visual trick on the side skirts and exhaust covers. The parts look just beautiful without being shimmed down.

The turret is great, too. Weld seams are sharp and everything fits well. The commander's cupola and hatch features a very convincing cast texture. The hole for the S-mine launcher is flashed over and has to be opened from the inside. Does this mean they are doing an A model as well? (completely unsubstantiated rumor). The only fault on the turret is that the escape hatch doesn't quite open far enough. That's because it operates with a simplified movable hinge.

Der Suspension

The lower hull/suspension are well detailed and feature separate torsion bars, so that the suspension can be positioned over rough terrain. A pin keeps the bars aligned and this can be clipped off if desired. The lower hull details feature access panels on both sides and bottom. No battery or screw holes were to be found. The hull above the tracks is even covered! It makes you miss the good old days of classic Tamiya kits. They don't make 'em like they used to. Thank goodness.

Like its predecessor, the Tiger II, many of the lower hull fittings remain accurate even though you can't see them. The final drives and their cast inserts also bear more of that cool cast texture.

The wheels feature very sharp, clean detail. All bolts feature precise hex-shaped castings. During construction, I placed the wheels on the axles with only the outer row glued to facilitate painting the tires.

Assembling the hull took a bit of a trick. The rear hull plate was glued to the lower hull. Fearing fit problems experienced with the King Tiger, I glued the upper hull to the lower only at the front edge. With the front welded together, I carefully aligned the top and sides to the rear plate. It took a little adjusting, but ended up fitting well.

The upper hull featured more awesome engineering. The separately molded engine hatch fits flawlessly into the engine deck. Ambitious modelers could easily install either a Verlinden or a stolen Italeri engine compartment (of course really ambitious modelers would scratchbuild it!). The same perfect fit holds true for the driver and radio

operator's hatches (someone at Tamiya must be having massive head expansion about now). Incidentally, these hatches have very nice internal latch mechanisms and leverage rods, so you may want to leave them open. However, if you do, you'll have to clean up some ejector pin marks. No biggie. Further mentionables on the upper hull include a working travel lock, good looking Notek light and a ball machine gun mount with accurate recessed weld joint around it.

The sides of the Panther G hull were basically big tool racks. The tools were mounted on metal strips welded to the hull, as were the spare track holders. I was concerned that plastic parts would be too thick and look oversized. Tamiya's parts look fine. The pins on the track holders are too short, however. On the real tank, the pins protruded through the track links which were locked in the another L-shaped pin. This would be a very tough call to do in plastic, but detailing it would have been facilitated by longer pins.

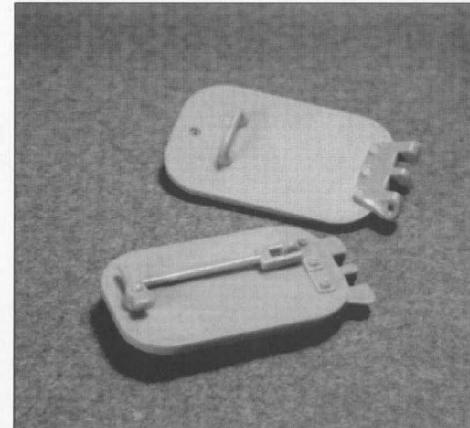
The forward tool racks contained the greatest flaw in the kit. The attachment point for the tow cables are represented as a hollow rod protruding from the rack. The actual point was a big, mushroom shaped lug. Such a shameless lack of attention to detail should be punished! Don't worry, just kidding, It's a minor point of contention and is barely worth mentioning. I only mentioned it to keep from being accused of taking kickbacks from Tamiya.

The tools are very crisply molded. I especially rejoiced in the towing clevises being molded without straps or anything else. People will be raiding these tools for future projects, no doubt.

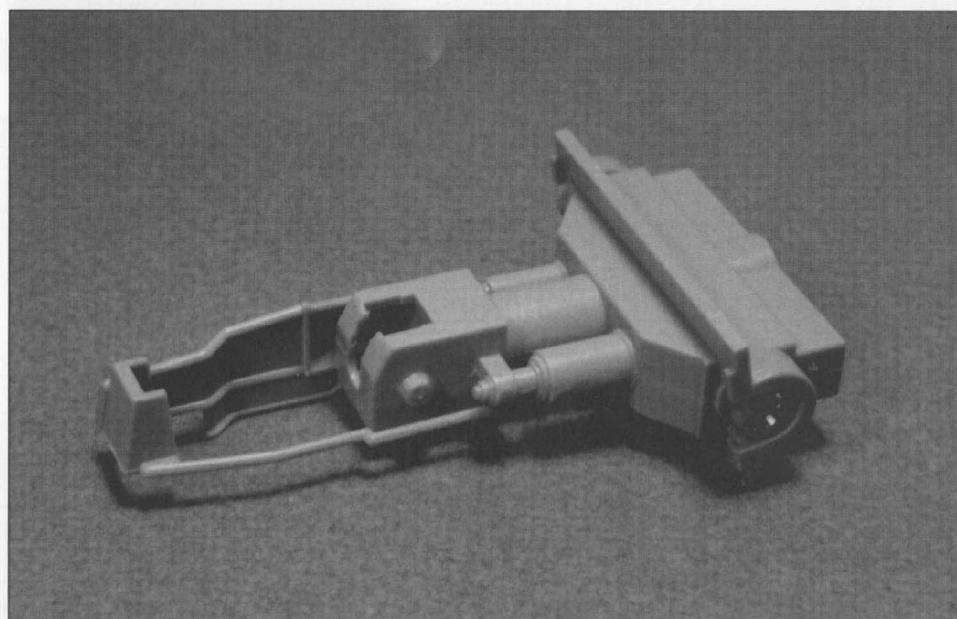
The side skirt supports are one piece units. The actual ones were L-shaped sheet metal. Again, Tamiya has beveled the ends of the supports so they look L-shaped. Each support has six hooks hanging from it. The hooks are very complex on the real tank and look overly simplified in the kit. They should extend through the holes in the side skirts, but are too short. With the skirts on, the problem is not to noticeable. If necessary, fine strip metal could be inserted through the holes to stimulate the hook ends.

Feline Finish

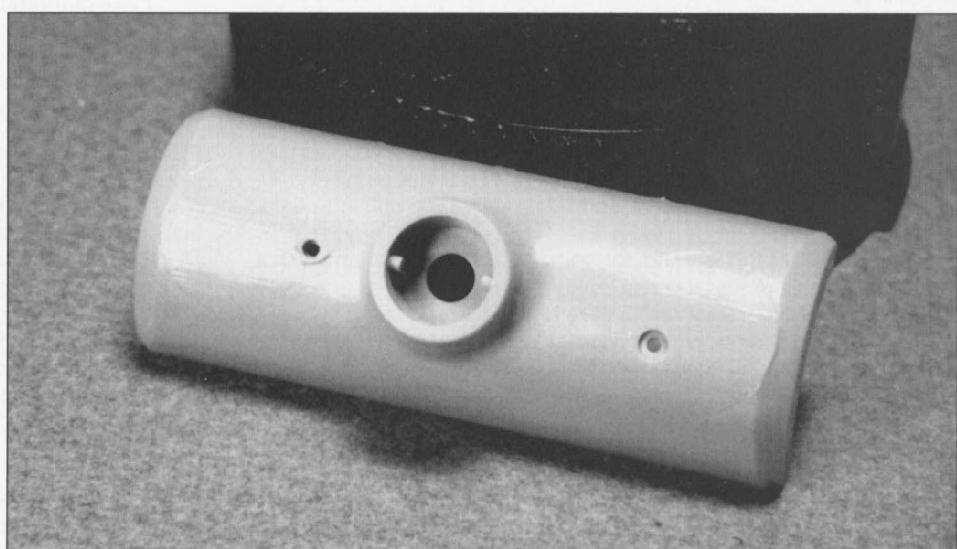
I wanted to do something a little different on my feline, rather than the obligatory three-color camo. I opted for a



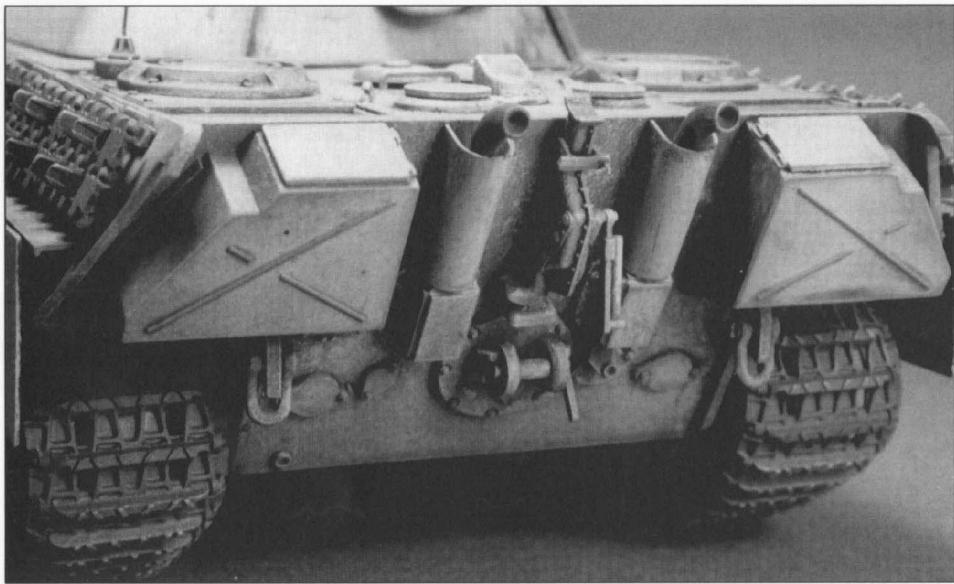
Left: the exquisitely detailed commander's hatch, showing more of that convincing cast texture seen throughout this kit. Right: the radio operator's and the driver's hatches. Look carefully and you'll notice that the mounting screws for the hinges pass through a flange and are capped off with hex head nuts. Pretty impressive.



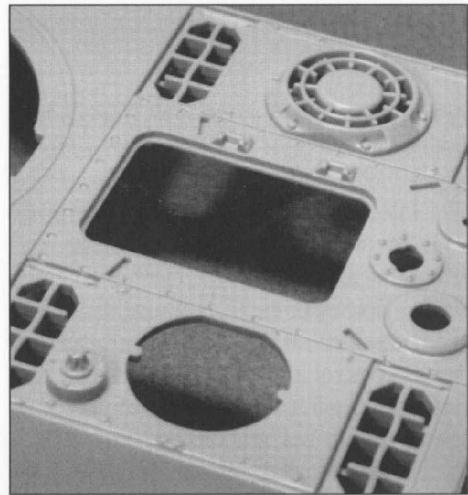
Above: the detailed gun breech. It wouldn't take much to super-detail it from this point. Note the screw head. Unlike the nut and bolt configuration on the Tiger II, this one is completely hidden once the assembly is installed in the turret.



The outer gun mantlet. More of that cast detail is visible here. Those cast circles are spot-on. It'd be a shame to cover them up with zimmerit.



The rear hull. The welded exhaust bases and the shrouds on the exhaust pipes are features that are indicative of the early G model Panther.



The top of the engine deck prior to assembly. Notice the empty hole for the circular engine grate? The two grates are identical, so why would one be molded on and the other a separate piece? Most likely this means a late G will follow, as this is the location of the one raised cover.

How about that Panther, or... What's in an Ausf?

The Panther often carries the mantle (along with the Tiger) of the most feared tank of the Second World War. One must wonder though, who it was that started this. It must certainly stem from the reaction of stunned allied tankers who watch their shells ping off the hides of Ausf. A's in Normandy.

However, by the end of the summer, the boys in khaki seemed to have figured how to make the most of what they had and many after-action reports state Panthers were often dispatched, if not right away, but dispatched none the less.

Without a doubt, it was the Panther's 75mm gun that was the most potent element of its design. Combined with superior optics and deadly ammo, its long range capabilities were awesome. But if allied tankers could get the jump on their German counterparts first, it could be a short fight. The Panther's armor was far from invulnerable and many photos show some surprisingly straight-on shots to the hull and turret.

The French didn't have a very high opinion of the Panther (they probably didn't have a very high opinion of anything German by 1945). They put captured A's and G's to work after the war, hoping to bolster their Shermans with a little heavier metal.

Their records show that the tanks did not have a very good maintenance record. Something that can't be overlooked in peacetime, in spite of good shootin.' They put the Panther's useful road life at 150km, or about 93 miles!

That meant the vehicle could not travel more than that distance before it needed to be retired from the field for significant maintenance procedures.

The British built a few Ausf. G's and Jagdpanthers after the war, but their influence on British post-war tank design is tough to find. Even the West German Leopard



shows little in common with its earlier feline cousin. So, our first question is: Just how good a tank was the Panther?

If you can produce a tank that looks bad and shoots good, does that make it the best? Just think; the number of Shermans produced during the war was almost ten times that of the Panther and the T-34 was produced in similar (if not greater) numbers.

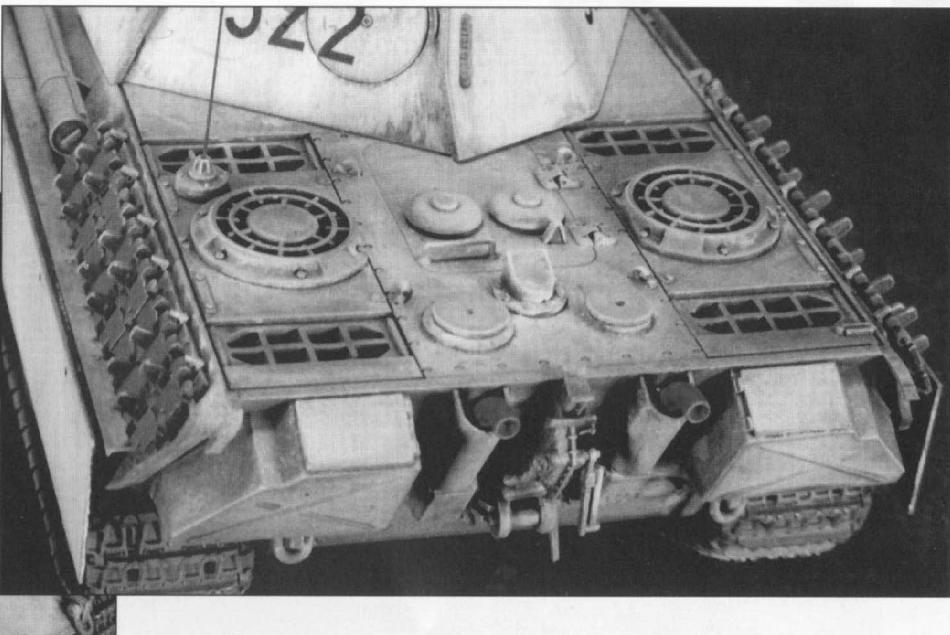
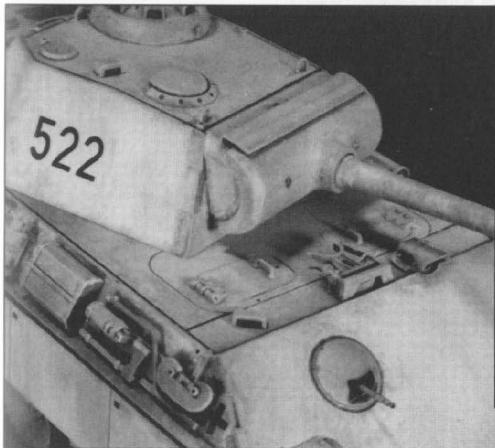
That ol' Ausf of Mine

In the words of Andy Rooney: "Dja ever wonder..." Did you ever wonder why the first model of the Panther was an Ausf. D? Wouldn't it have made more sense if it was an A? Maybe they were making up for this when they created the A model, which was the second in the series. Confused? Don't be. Because it all makes since with the next in the series; the Panther G. Wait a minute. What happened to B, C, and E?

Naturally (!), the F model was to follow. Maybe the Germans were kind of starting to catch on at this point.

So, what are the answers here? We'd like to officially open up this dialog here. Let us know your little known theories and speculations. If anyone can sight specific references please do so. We'll print the "best of" in an upcoming issue.

Below: the front upper hull and turret. The travel lock is fully detailed and periscopes are provided for the forward vision ports. Right: the rear deck. The engine hatch is molded separate just in case you want to slap in an engine.



winter scheme inspired by photos I saw in *Sturm & Drang* on the Panther.

The model was base-coated flat black and sprayed with an uneven coat of Tamiya Dark yellow. Once this had dried, I applied the whitewash coat with Windsor & Newton Titanium White oil paint. This paint is the miracle answer to doing a realistic snow camouflage (thanks Spanky!). The white was applied with a brush in an uneven coat. It was thinned only very minimally. Once on the model, it looked terrible. But wait, true believer, there's more! Now came the blending. A clean soft brush was used to blend the white overcoat. It works almost like drybrushing without using any paint. Blending the paint gives the model a more scale appearance and allows the basecoat to show through realistically.

The white coat was then allowed to dry. With oil paint, this took a few days. Once dry, the model was washed with black artist's gauche in Future floor wax. On the upper hull, the mix was diluted to almost straight was so as not to darken the snow camo too much. The kit was then decaled and dry-brushed with dark yellow and flat white paint. Some black staining and rust streaks were added using enamel paints to give the scheme some character.

The tracks were painted in Floquil Antique Bronze and dry-brushed silver.

Final Assembly and Stuff

The tracks, through soft vinyl, were well detailed but the mating pins looked a bit short. Of course, these are not meant to be melted. These new-fangled tracks by Tamiya can be glued with regular glue. I used small dabs of super glue. The spare links were very

nice and fit together well. You will be able to snag a set of link-to-link tracks from Tamiya for the Panther, and they are composed of several sprues of the spares that are provided in the kit. These tracks are pretty nice. The knock-out points are cleverly concealed within the face pattern, rather than on the inside—where they would stick out like a thumb growing out of your forehead. The only drawback is that the guide teeth are not molded hollow.

The schurzen (side skirts) fit well up against their supports, but unfortunately hide some the gee-whiz details beneath. Oh well, I know it's there. As mentioned before, they look realistically thin. The edges are beveled and make the skirts look convincingly to scale.

The entire building time for this kit was

less than 12 hours. It would have been faster without the white scheme. Sitting next to my \$110.00 Gunze Sangyo Panther, which took three to four months, there isn't that much difference. In many respects Tamiya's Panther is better. I plan on doing another Tamiya Panther G using brass engine deck screens, tool clip latches and side skirts hooks along with Frulmodellissmo hollow guide tooth tracks (I'm a glutton for punishment), but other than, it won't need much super detailing.

To sum it up, Tamiya's new Panther G is one of the best detailed, most intelligently engineered armor kits yet produced. There are few armor kits that can be built so quickly into such a detailed replica. Tamiya has taken AFV modeling to a whole new level. Gee, I wonder if there advertising or P.R. departments are hiring!

—Eric Knight

MMiR RECCE

Tamiya Panther Ausf G. Kit number 35170. Sample provided by Tamiya America, Inc. Available wherever Tamiya products are sold. The retail price of this kit is \$47.98.

References

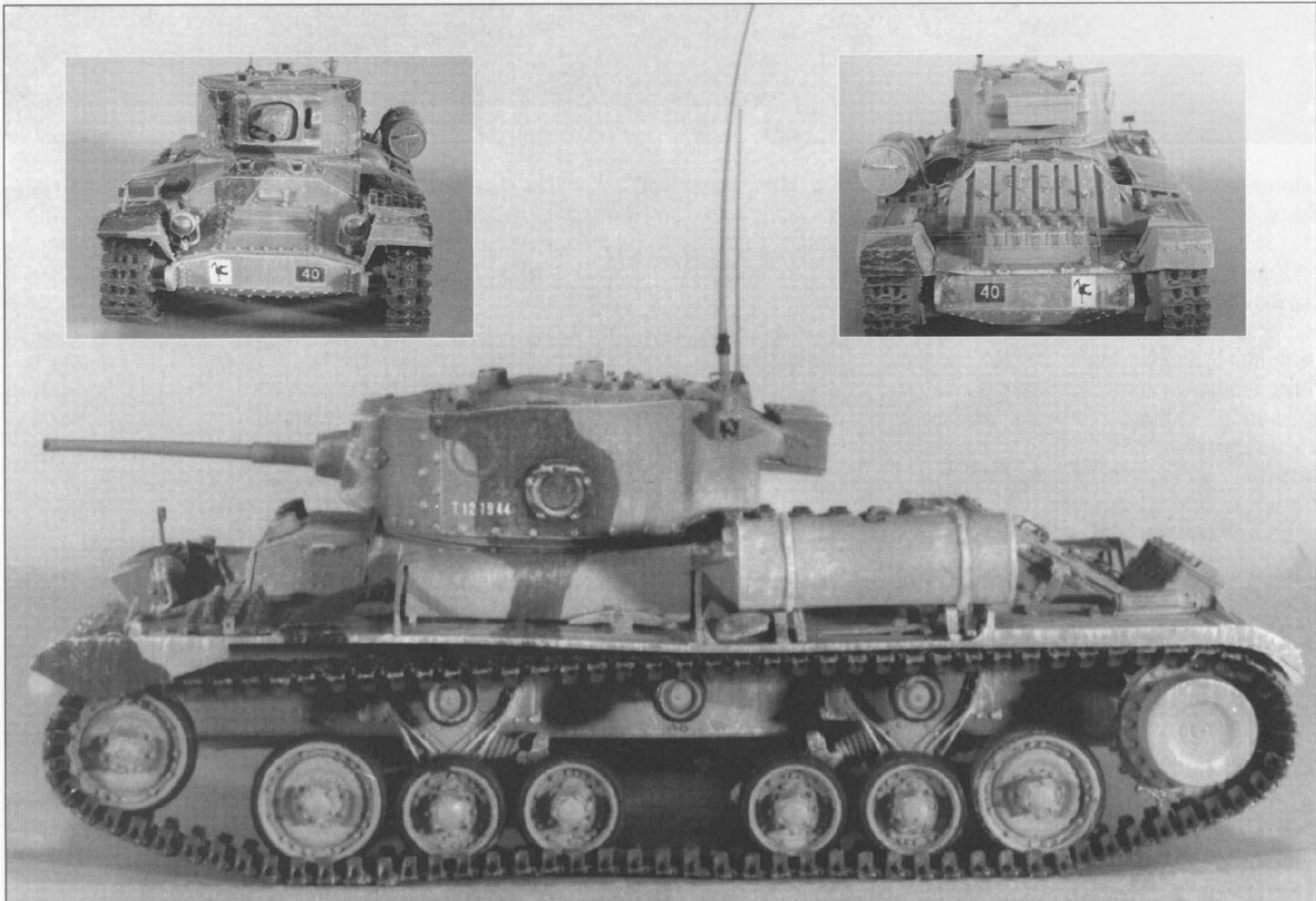
Panther in Action by Bruce Culver. Squadron Signal Publications. Part of the Armor in Action Series, this book has been around for some time. It's a very good basic reference, with plans and color plates. About eight dollars or so, wherever Squadron books are sold.

Panther and Its Variants by Walter J. Spielberger. Schiffer Publishing. The English version of *Panther und seine arbarten*, covers all phases of the tank's development. Plans and interior photos. Around thirty-five dollars. Available wherever Schiffer books are sold.

Panzers in Saumur, No. 2. Art Box Co., Ltd. Extensive coverage of the Panther A preserved at the Musée des Blindés in Saumur, France. Hundreds of interior and exterior photos, plans and drawings. Although the photos are of an A model, the G is featured in various drawings. About twenty-five dollars. Check your local hobby shop or see the Book Services Menu.

My Funny Valentine

A loving look
at The Accurate
Armour Kit



If you want to build WWII British armor, then Accurate Armour's offerings are just your cup of tea (so to speak). The injection molding companies seem to be content with the bare minimum in this area, consisting of the Italeri Crusader and the Tamiya Churchill; if you're lucky you might find a Tamiya Matilda II. This leaves a big gap, and the resin companies, particularly this Scottish one, admirably fill the breach.

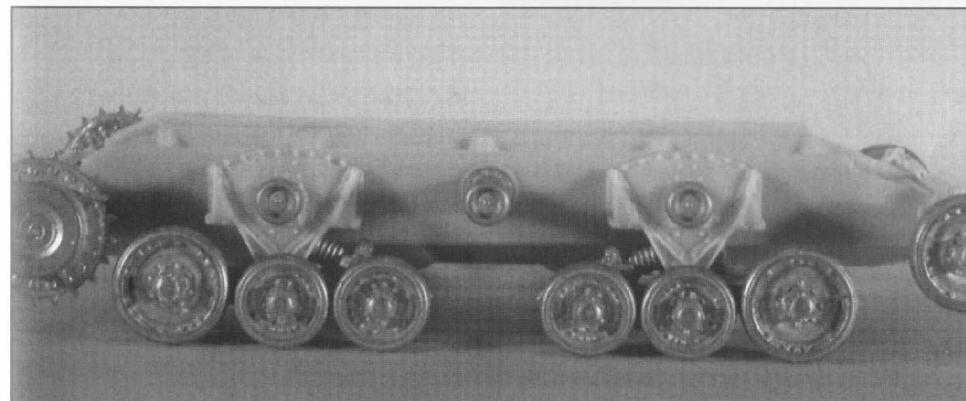
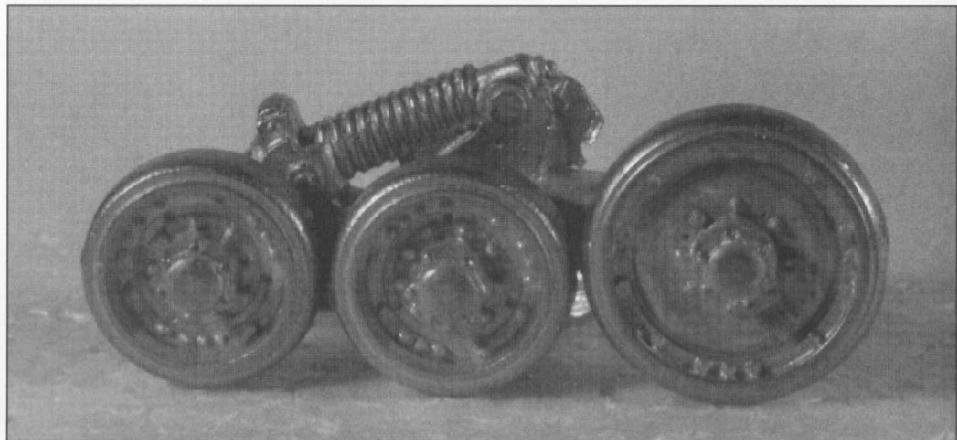
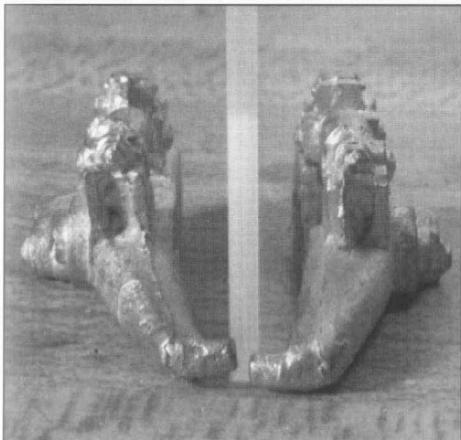
My personal experience with Accurate

Armour began when I built their M18 Hellcat. It's a beautiful kit, with exquisite molding, fit and finish, as well it should be for its cost. The Valentine is the same price but not quite the same quality. More on this when we get into the construction.

The kit is of the Mark III/V; the difference between the two is the engine, an AEC diesel in the former, a GMC diesel in the latter. There are no external distinguishing features. Earlier marks had a smaller, two-man turret, while later ones were

progressively up-gunned from this mark's two-pounder (40mm) to six-pounder (57mm) and finally to 75mm.

This is a typical modern resin kit, in that it's multi-media, consisting of resin, white metal, and photo-etched brass. The instructions consist of a six-page booklet, beginning with a short history, ending with a parts list. Sandwiched in between is a set of instructions and a painting and reference guide. Most of the written instructions are concerned with the suspension; there are



diagrams showing the rest. Here's the first problem. For the price, I expect a set of legible instructions; these looked like the copy machine they were run on was in dire need of some help. Although the illustrations are very competently drawn, the method of reproducing the instruction sheets made most of the drawings very difficult to make out. While it doesn't make the job impossible, it certainly adds some hours to the construction in the form of seemingly endless dry fitting. In contrast, look at a recent MB kit for what instructions should be.

Suspension Rx: Take 2 Dremels...

If you don't have a Dremel tool, now's the time to go get one. The resin parts of this kit all have a large resin blocks attached to them, and they all seem to be on the most fragile areas of the parts. Trying to saw these off is asking for disaster; trying to sand them off by hand would take you forever, and probably use up enough emery boards or sandpaper to stock a Wal-Mart for a month. There's plenty of cleanup on the white metal stuff, too. If used very carefully, the cutting wheel of the Dremel makes short and clean work of the excess without damage.

The first thing the instructions would have you do is join the upper and lower hull. I don't know how you'd get the tracks on if you did this. There's almost no clearance at the

drive sprocket, and remember—you can't 'roll' these tracks on, as all the sprockets, idlers and wheels are fixed. I got the upper and lower hull ready to join (no easy job because of the excessive resin and flash on the mating surfaces) so I could dry-fit and make sure the tracks lined up right. Then I built the whole suspension and tracks before adding the upper hull. By the way, Accurate Armour said the same thing on the M18; I built it the same way I did this one. The Scots must be doing something that they're not telling us about... maybe sliding on the drive sprocket with the tracks?

The next problem with the instructions is with stage four, which begins by telling you "THIS STAGE IS NOT EASY TAKE CARE!" (This is like Cheops telling his construction manager as they looked at the blueprints of the Great Pyramid, "Hmm....doesn't look easy.") The way they tell you to do it, 'not easy' is not quite correct; it's more like impossible unless you have a trained octopus to assist in holding a bunch of parts together. Having lost my octopus in an unfortunate hunting accident, I had to do this a different way.

Stage one is O.K. so go ahead and put the fixed parts (they mean the drive sprocket and front idler mounts) in place. This requires some sanding of the mounting

Above left: complicating the problems with the suspension; the bogie parts don't have the same curve on each part. This had to be corrected (not easily) so the wheels would line up.
Above right: a completed bogie assembly.
Left: finished lower hull with suspension installed (finally!!)

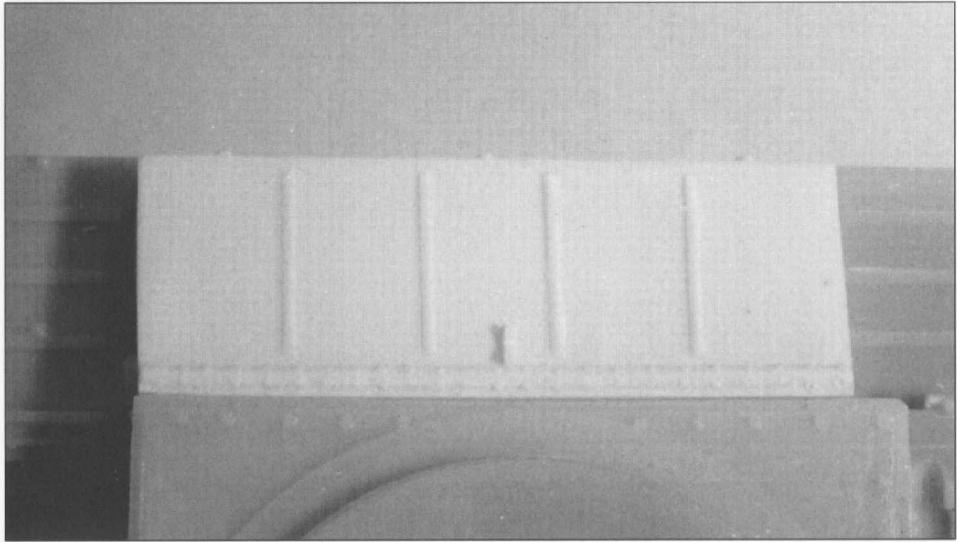
surfaces on the hull to make the stuff fit flat, and a bit of cleanup of the parts as well.

Stage two and three involve the assembly of the bogies. The front (big) wheel of each set should have its mounting hole drilled out to .095 to fit the pin.

Then I glued the mounts, part 43, in place; there are ridges on the hull to locate them. I then put on the front idler so I'd have something to line the bogies up on. The bogies were pushed onto the mounts (this is a bit of a tight fit). Then the bottom mounts, part 44, were glued in place, making sure that the bogies are in line and straight up and down. At this point, glue the inside and outside mounting points on the bogies. This process was a real nightmare, and took hours and hours of dry fitting, gluing, and muttering, sometimes progressing to outbursts of weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. I'm not one of those modelers who love difficulty just for difficulty's sake.

Then I put on the return rollers. The front and rear ones go on first, giving you something with which to align the center. There was a bit of cleanup involved with the white metal center mounts; one didn't line up without some grinding.

The last thing before the tracks are the drive sprockets. The ones in my kit needed a lot of work; it looked as if the mold was



Stowage bin detail; notice the fine casting of the hinge.

misaligned. The parts are white metal, though, so it was pretty easy to file them to shape.

At this point, I had to paint the lower hull and suspension. There's just no way to put this track on without glue, so all the stuff had to have a coat of paint—same for the track, of course. I originally thought of doing the whole thing with no paint, but after all, the model cost \$130, and I wasn't going to display it unpainted. My apologies to all of you that wanted to see it naked.

The tracks also needed a lot of clean-up, and at this time I realized that I only had enough for one side (If I'd checked the parts list, item by item, I'd have discovered it sooner). I sent a letter off to Scotland, and only ten days later, received the number that should have been in the kit plus extras. I wasn't impressed by being shorted; but I was very impressed with how quickly they responded to the problem.



Right side, hull rear, showing hatch stay in white metal, fire extinguisher, and brass fender braces. Small stowage box just forward of the second brace.

Back to the tracks. This is one case where I'd prefer injection molded; the detail on them was poor, and the hours of cleaning the excess flash off made me crazy! I didn't try to completely clean them up; only the areas that show were given the treatment. At least they were easy to put on after the cleanup. I glued two of the long lengths together and mounted them on the top run centered. I then put aluminum foil around everything but the tracks to keep the heat from affecting anything else, and used a hair dryer to bend the tracks around the idler and the drive sprocket. The track will just touch the front and rear bogie wheels; fill in the gap and you've got it made. And they look good on the vehicle.

My Life Gets Easier: The Turret

This part is (finally!) easy. There are a few small pinholes, but only under the turret



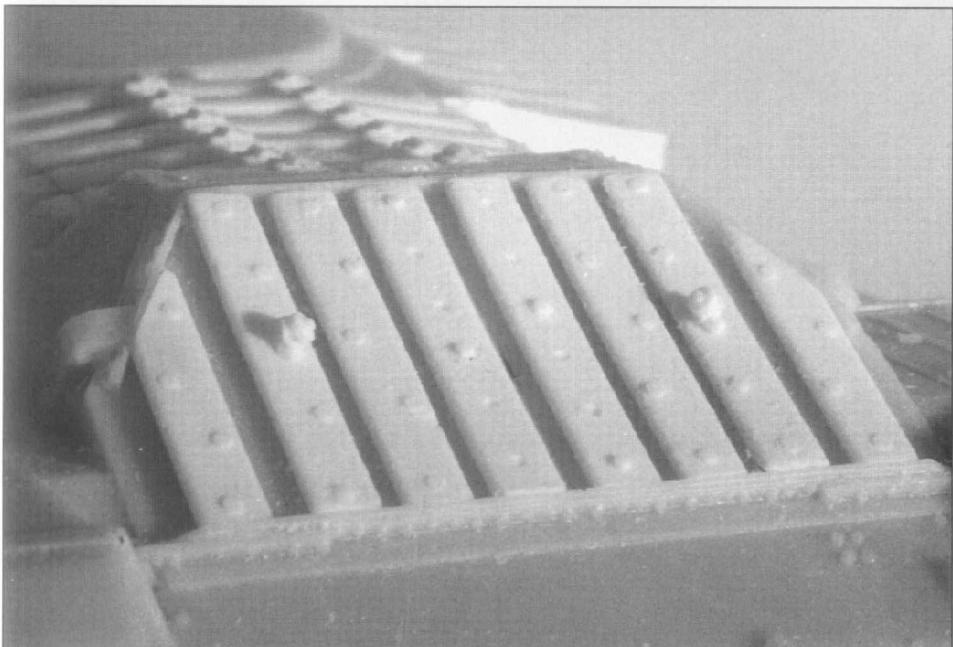
The exhaust system with brass and white metal parts in place, before the addition of the large photo-etched guard.

bustle where they don't show, so I didn't even bother with them. The only thing wrong here is the machine gun barrel; it was just a featureless lump, so I substituted a Besa barrel from a Tamiya Churchill. The brass parts on the stowage box worked well and looked great, but I'm glad I had the research photos (from the Budge collection) to get the exact placement.

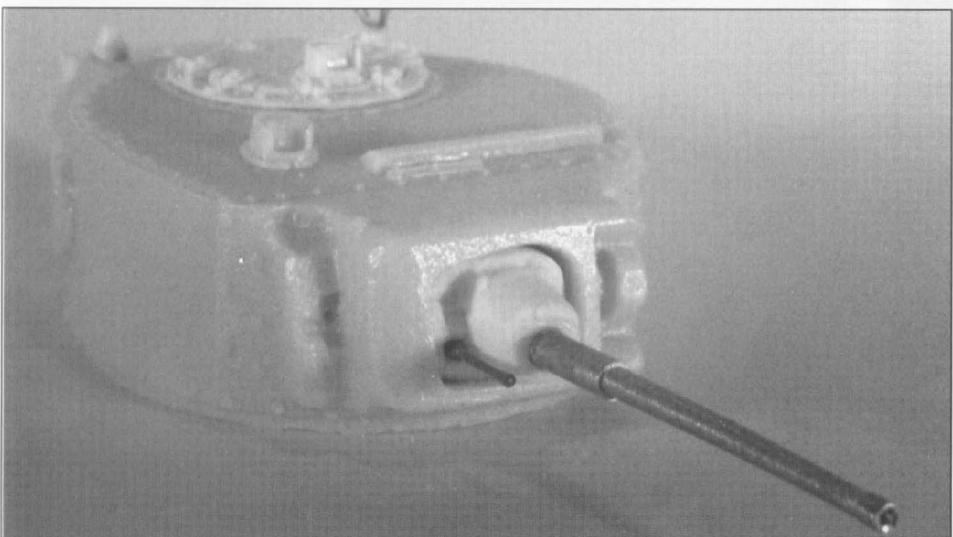
The three part hatch fit with a minimum of cleanup. I built the vehicle with the hatches closed (there's no interior detail in the turret or hull), but the company did furnish a beautiful periscope for the inside of the hatch. A figure posed in the hatch would obscure the lack of detail and allow you to use the periscope, but I don't do figures. Ever seen a mannequin in an army surplus store with fatigues on? That's what



The POW carrier, showing the brass handles; also note brass handles on the outlet covers above. The POW carrier had to have Grandt line bolts added at the corners.



Rear upper hull detail, showing the nice casting on the air outlet louvers.



Front view of turret, showing the white metal main gun and the Besa barrel from the Tamiya Churchill.

my figures look like.

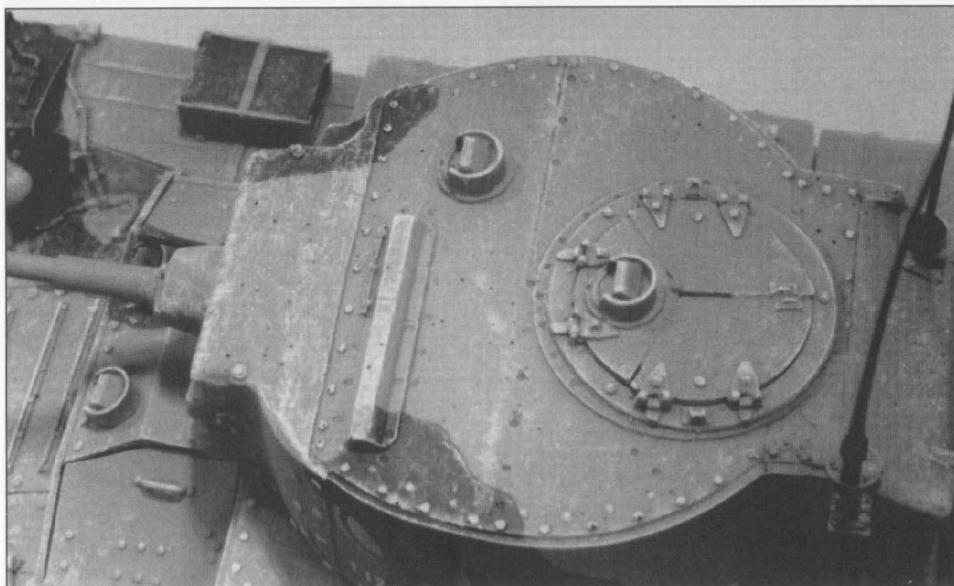
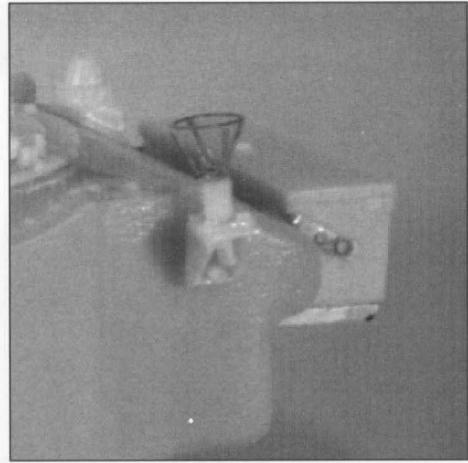
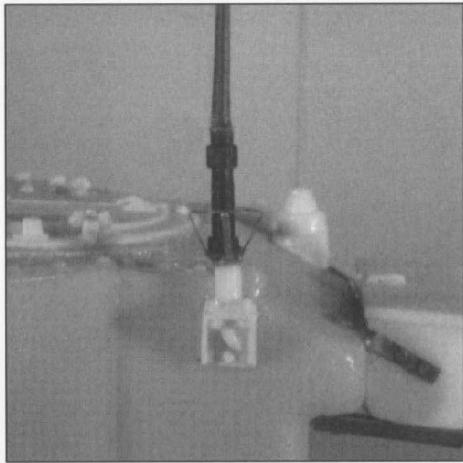
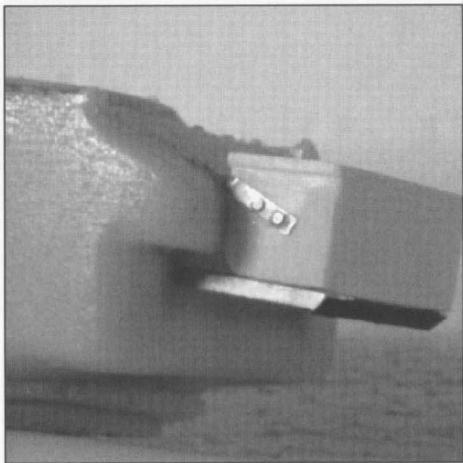
The etched brass antenna guard is a nice touch. The guard didn't look easy, but it folded into exactly the right shape and went right on, and looks terrific. I wish I had enough of them to go back and retrofit all my Brit tanks. No antenna base was provided; I used one from a Tamiya Sherman. The sighting vanes were too much for me, though. Just too small for my fingers or anything else I tried to hold them with.

Heckofva Hull

A couple things are obvious when you take the hull out of the box. AA apparently was so concerned with not having fenders too thick for the scale that my kit barely had fenders at all. They were so thin in the middle that I had to run a bead of Zap-a-Gap along the hull sides to give them strength. There was warping to deal with, too; I could never get the exhaust side just right, even after numerous tries. And at the rear, they were too thick, so much so that you'd never get the upper hull on over the tracks. The Dremel tool took care of that pretty easily, but if I'd have followed the instructions and had the upper hull on with the suspension it would've been real tricky. The rear of the hull at the point where it mates with the lower hull is poorly done. There was lots of excess resin to clean off. Once past these glitches, though, the model displays the kind of exquisite molding these guys are known for. Their mold maker is an artist in every sense of the word!

There is a profusion of tiny bits to put on, and the instructions are just about useless for this. They give you the number of a part about the size of a flea and then have an arrow pointing at the right side of the hull. Really helps a lot. Had it not been for the photos furnished by MMiR (which you now do), this project would have been much more difficult. As it was, I misplaced the fender braces because I couldn't tell from the plans exactly where they went; they go in the middle of the resin plates on the fenders, not next to them. Oh, well.

On the hull top around the turret ring the photos show some "V" shaped things which I assume are (bullet) splash guards. I intended to make these from Plastruct angle but I forgot to put 'em on, remembering only after the full paint job. Not all photos of Valentines show these, so maybe they weren't on all of them. Also most of the North African Valentines were fitted with sand shields, but none were provided here. They'd be easy to make from brass or sheet



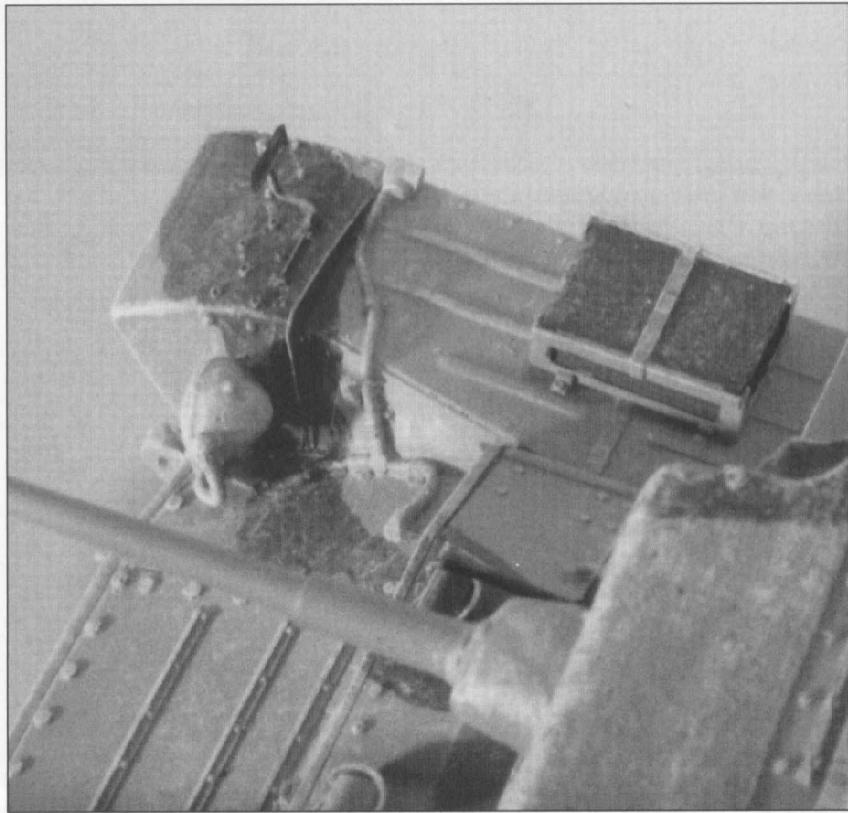
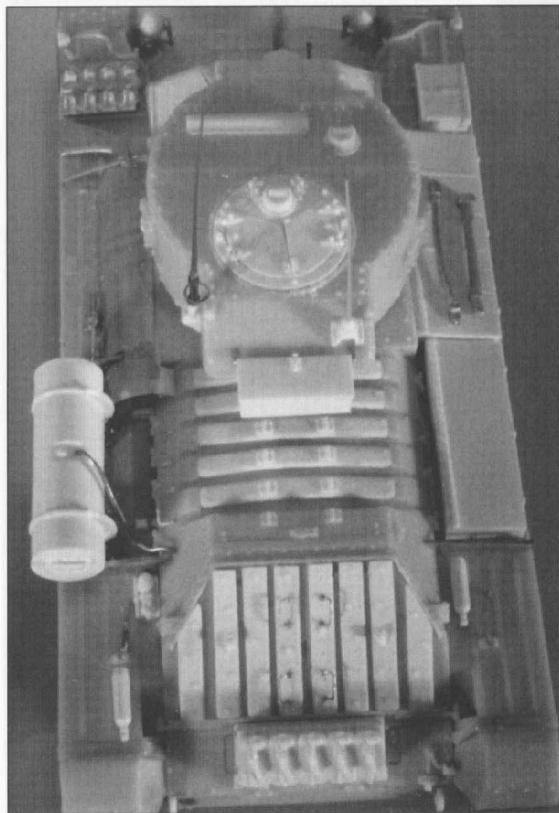
Above left to right: the stowage box on the rear of the turret showing the brass parts; the turret, showing the brass antenna guard. This is the antenna that had to have the Sherman base added; the Sherman antenna base.

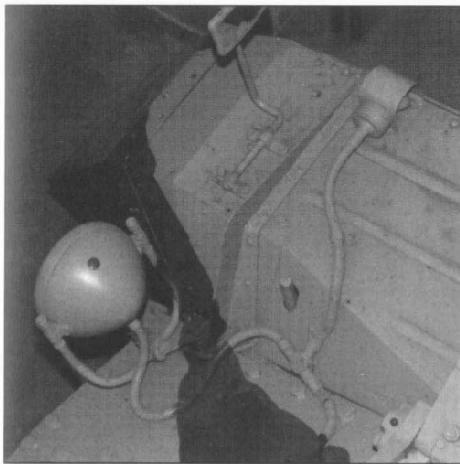
Below left: overhead view, complete and unpainted. I know Shep Paine says these shots are a no-no, but I like 'em. Left: the top of the turret showing off more of that very well done casting detail.

Below: right front fender, showing light, jack block and rear view mirror.

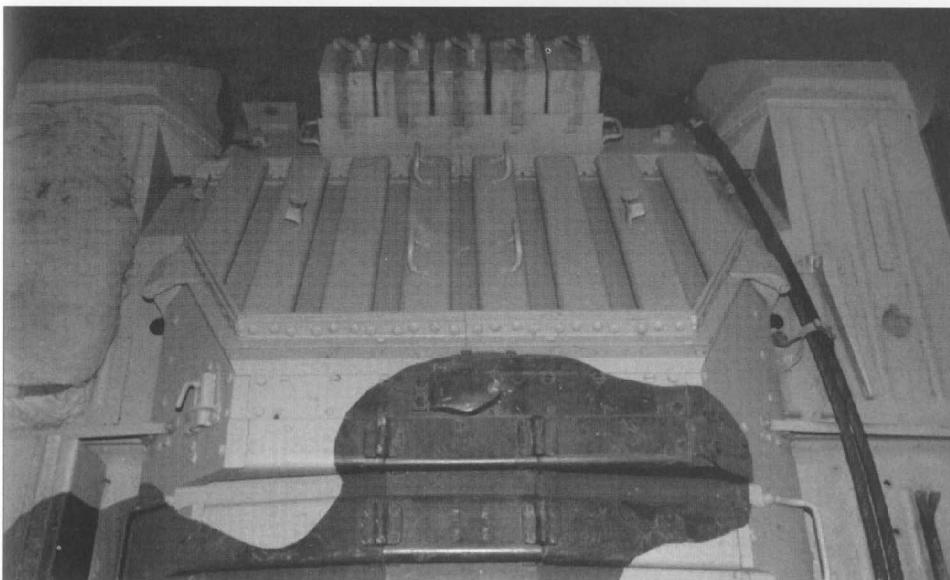
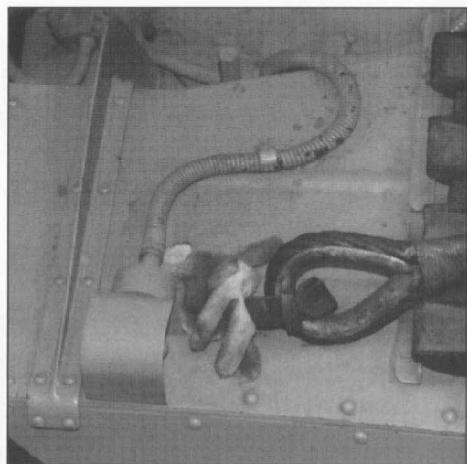
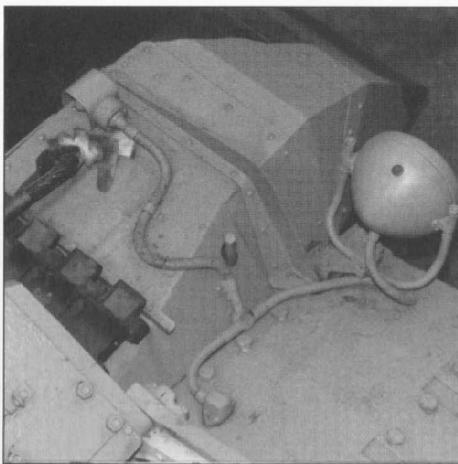
Opposite page, top: three views of the fender hardware and the wiring of the front fenders. All of the photos shown here are of the vehicle currently preserved at the Budge Collection. Opposite, middle: overall shot of the rear deck. The hardline camouflage scheme is evident in this photo.

Opposite, far right: the turret rear showing the antenna base and the rear stowage box.





All Budge photos: Charlie Parker



styrene, but the brass parts for the front fenders were so nice I didn't want to not use them.

The brass exhaust guard was not easy, because it was one of those deals where you run around trying to find something to bend it around that's the right size. The plans aren't helpful either, being vague as to placement. Interminable dry-fitting!

Paint and Markings

I painted the vehicle with Pactra acrylics. The base coat is Africa yellow, with the camouflage patches dark green. The various bits were painted (painstakingly) by brush. Normally I'd paint the exhaust system, spare tracks, the POW rack etc. before adding them to the tank.

The markings are for 40 Royal Tank Regiment at the time of El Alamein. This outfit was raised in Liverpool, and the bird is the mythical liver bird. The serial number is directly from the photos of the Budge vehicle.

Conclusion

Except for the suspension, this would be

a slow but not particularly difficult project, if a set of legible instructions were provided. As it was, it took hours longer (a conservative estimate of the added time would be 12 hours!) and there were unavoidable mistakes made, due to the sometimes illegible and maddeningly vague plans.

The finished article looks good, and since I don't compete, the errors are not a



disaster. Experience is a definite must here because of the suspension. I can see someone buying this and being put off all Accurate Armor kits by the difficulties and the instructions. This would be a shame, because not all their kits suffer from the problems mentioned in this review. ☹

—Joe Morgan

MMiR RECCE

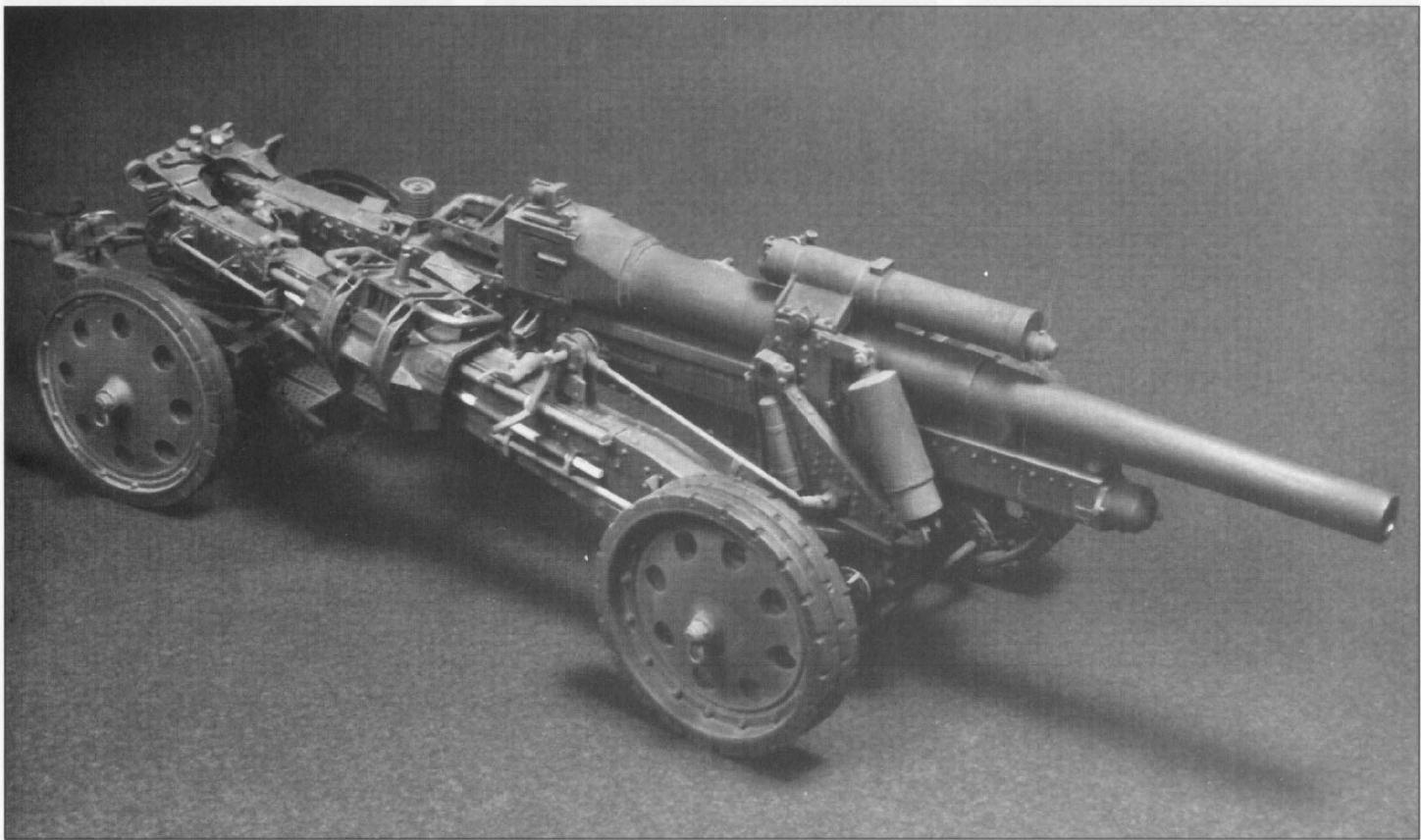
Accurate Armor Valentine Mk III/IV. Kit number K15. Purchased from the manufacturer; Accurate Armor, Ltd., Units 15-16 Kingston Industrial Estate, Port Glasgow, Inverclyde, Scotland UK, PA14 5DG. List price is £56.50. For customers in the U.S., the Value Added Tax is deducted at 14.9% and then postage is added at 25% of the order. The final cost was around \$79.00. Payment was by Mastercard (via fax: 44-475-743-746), delivery time was surprisingly fast—approximately two weeks.

References

- British Tanks in N. Africa 1940-42*. Osprey Vanguard number 23. A good general reference. Available wherever the line is sold.
- Armor, Camouflage and Markings, North Africa 1940-43 Volume One*. by George R. Bradford. Markings and photos of all the various armored vehicles deployed in the region.
- La Guerre du Desert Bir-Hakiem*, Militaria Magazine Special, number 6. French text, but good photos and color plates of Mk IIs.

The Protze & The Punch

Building the Verlinden 15cm Howitzer and limber



The German 15.0cm howitzer was part of a large range of towed artillery employed by the Wehrmacht during WWII. It was primarily used as a field piece, seeing service in the Polish campaign, the African desert, the Soviet Union, France and the final Reich battles. The common configuration in the early war period was to see this gun pulled by the Sdkfz 7 half-track, although later in the war it was towed by a variety of other types of transport. This gun was also deployed in the self-propelled mode as the Hummel.

The VLS release is fairly big news. VLS's reputation for casting quality is well-known and they don't often do complete kits—especially ones of this complexity.

This gun was (and still is, I think) previously available from Gunze Sangyo. That kit was completely cast in white metal and it carried a hefty price tag, around \$225.00. It did not include a limber. The VLS version

weighs in at only \$85.00 and it is completely cast in resin, and it does include the protze or limber. It was these things that initially attracted me to the model. I thought that it would be much easier to build than its all-metal predecessors, due to the weight and the ease of working with resin. I was almost right.

As I mentioned at the top, the kit is complex. It is very well rendered, just about every conceivable part is included. However, the instructions were sparse in describing many of the assembly sequences. Exploded view drawings make up all the sequences, with little or no written instructions. This is very unfortunate, as the model is quite good. So because of its relatively low price and wide availability, I'd hate to see anyone avoid it (or not finish it) because of the instructions.

So, the following article should be considered required reading before you begin. I have tried to smooth out all the difficult sequences as well as offering my

suggestions on embellishing the various steps to improve the ease of building. I went through all the hassle so you won't have to! If you're not going to build the kit, just skip all the boring stuff and just enjoy the photos.

I'm going to bounce around the assembly sequence quite a bit. I felt it was a better strategy to build the main base, the trails, spades, cradle, barrel and then the limber.

Last Chance to Turn Back

You should decide before you begin if your model will be built in firing or traveling mode. This is not a kit to get half done before deciding one way or the other. The weapon was designed to close-up in a specific way for travel and this will affect construction at almost all stages.

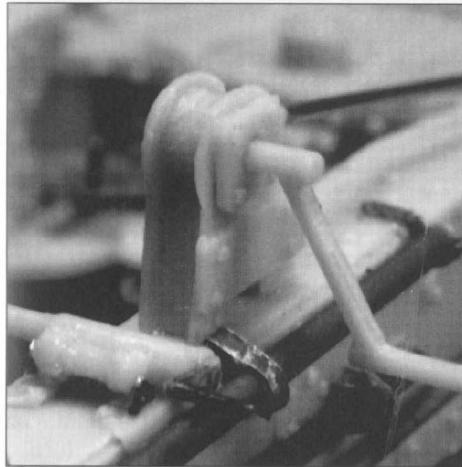
I built the gun base first. On step one, the inside part 24 needs to be flipped over to fit correctly. Cut handles for part 24 at this point but don't add them until after the trail arms have been attached.

Drill holes for copper rod in parts R35

and R21, the crank arm bases. Cut the rod long enough so that small nubs are left at the outside edges of parts R21 & R35 for hand crank parts 16. Make sure parts 16 fit over the ends of the nubs. Back the hand cranks off of parts R21 and 35 slightly and then glue.

I drilled holes on both ends of the main axle (part R102) for installation of the appropriate size brass rod. I used a lot of brass rod throughout this kit. Resin parts are more delicate than comparable white metal parts, and the brass helps to reinforce the areas that carry the most weight.

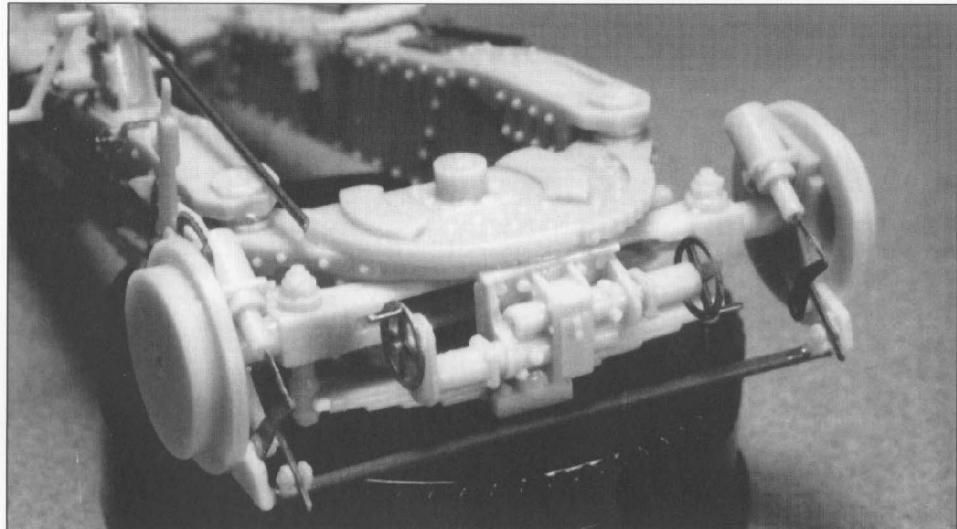
Fit the brake drums on to the axle, and cut the plastic rod to fit between the lower parts of the brake drum arms and glue in place. Now rotate the brake drums forward about 15° using the top edge of the brake drums and the top of the main base (R91) as a guide. Run a small amount of glue into the joint to attach the brake drums to the axle, keeping the plastic rod parallel to it. The pneumatic linkages (parts R25) should be glued to both ends near the top of the rod, not on the brake drums arms as shown.



The elevation control.

All the rest of the parts in this sequence fit except the swing arm (R18). The arm needs to be lengthened to make it fit. I used a styrene spacer. This allows it to clear the pneumatic linkage assembly (R22) at the proper angle.

Locate the centers of all the wheel and brake parts and drill holes to accept rods from the axle. Glue the wheel halves together, then test fit the wheels and brake drums to the axle. I drilled holes in each side to accept the brass rod. Attach the parts to the axle making certain that the whole assembly is square.



The gun base and the brake drum assemblies. The drums needed to be forward slightly for a correct fit. Note the way the pneumatic linkages are attached.

Happy Trails

Proceed right to step seven and eight of the instructions. This covers the trail arms. I attached the arm gears (parts R15) to the trails first, then I drilled the ends of the arms to receive more brass rod. This allows the arms to remain workable throughout construction.

Find the centers of the pivot points on the gun base (R91), then drill to receive brass rod. Also drill holes in the trail arms from the bottom, being careful not to drill completely through the top piece. Go just far enough to give the rod some bite. Insert rod to attach each trail to the base. Make sure the assembly is plumb. Make adjustments now if necessary.

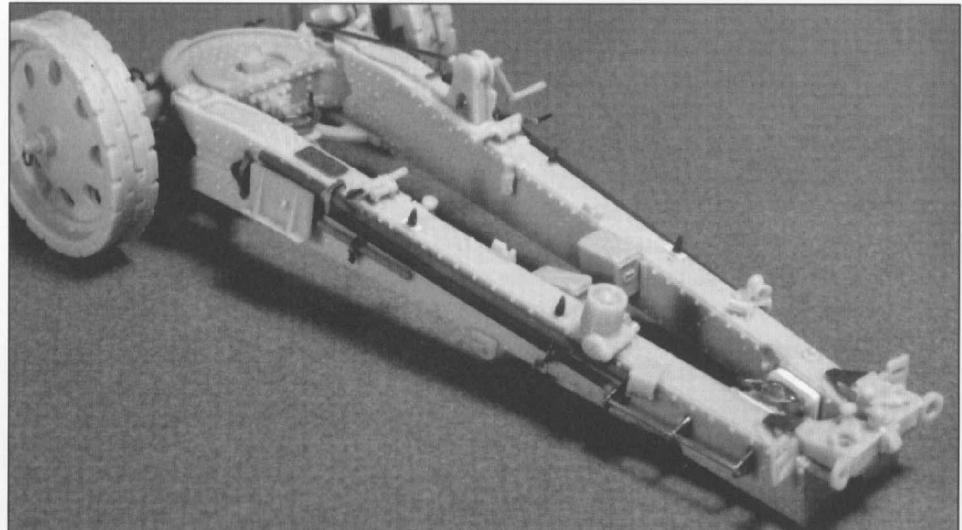
When detailing the trails, I started from rear and worked forward. Clean parts R103 & 104 carefully. Drill a hole through the large mark, using it as a guide on both parts. Glue the brass trail ends (parts 37 & 38) on each of the

trails, centering each. Attach parts R103 and 104 on the trails centering on each, don't mount flush at the ends with parts 37 & 38. Use the holes in the trails and in parts 37 and 38 as guides. They should line up with each other.

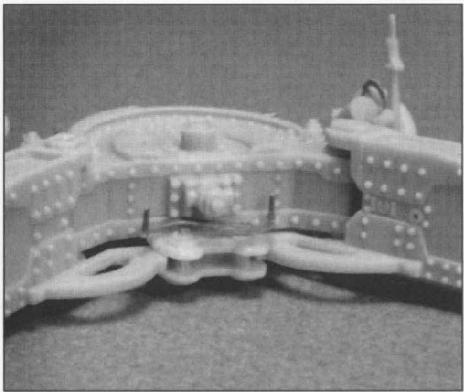
This is the point at which it is really crucial to decide whether you want to show your model in the firing or the traveling mode. If you choose firing mode, then you need to measure the diameter of parts R52 and make sure that the holes in the trails and in etched parts 37 & 38 are correct. If not, drill out a larger hole. If doing so, start from the copper side first.

Continue with the rest of step seven and eight, leaving off parts R66 and R45. If you're building your weapon in the traveling position, also leave off the following parts: R40, R41, R53, R65, R47, R55, 19, 34, 35, 36 for now.

The hooks, parts R32, should face down, not out, as shown in the instructions. Attach parts R65 before parts 23, when the trails are



The finished gun carriage. There is a profusion of tools and rods to be added to the sides of each trail. At this point, the trails are frozen into position. This makes painting harder, but assembly a lot easier.



The inside of the gun base showing off some of that very nice rivet detail which is present throughout the model.

closed. R65 should be parallel with the main axle, this gives you the proper angle. All other parts can be added per the instructions. One more point here, leave the rod you need for the ends of R73 off for now.

Back to firing versus traveling mode. For firing mode, set the trails at the proper

end of the gun trails you'll notice the hole you drilled through part R41 is off center and to the right. Also the arm on R40 doesn't wrap around the front of R41 like it should. I solved this problem by adding styrene spacers cut to the size of the mounting plate along parts R40 and 41. You have to play with the thickness of the spacers to get it just right. When the trails are closed, the hole in R41 should be centered between them. Part R41 should fit into R40 with the arm on R40 reaching all the way across the front of R41, almost the to other trail arm. The ends of both trails should barely touch. Once this has been accomplished, you can glue part 34 onto R41 and glue the trails together on the closed position. Add parts R47 and R55. R55 attaches to each inside rear corner of the gun trails with the large end on the right trail and the small end on the left. Now attach R47 to the

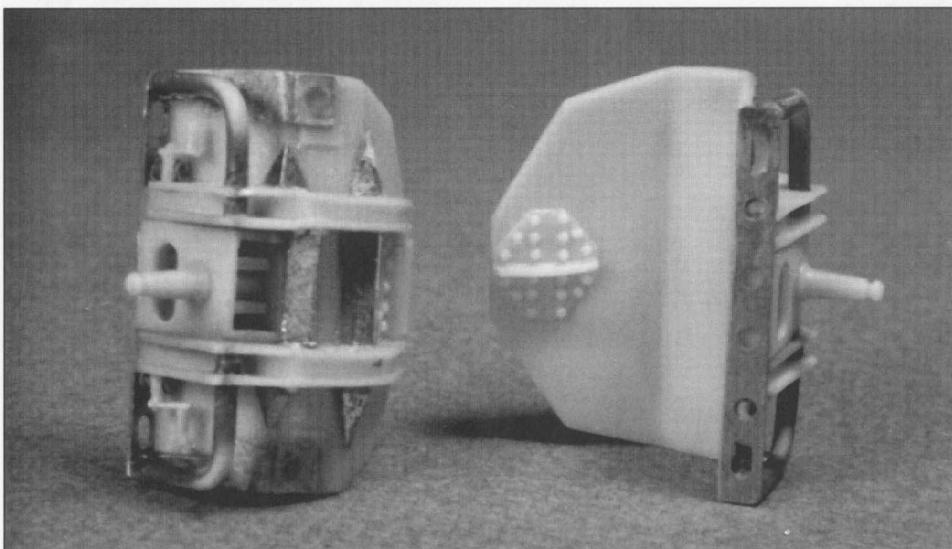
small end. Set parts 35 and 36 aside for now. Slide the wheels onto the brass axles and you've pretty much got the entire lower carriage assembly finished, all square, plumb and lookin' good.

The Nine of Spades

Step nine covers the assembly of the trail spades and they are pretty complex little models all by themselves. Clean up all the parts, making sure to open the oblong hole at the end of part R14. I found that etched part 42 needed to be flipped over from the position shown in the instructions. Dry fit 42 into part R14 first. Fit both into the spade shell (R109). Once you're satisfied with the fit, glue 42 on R14 and R14 onto the spade shell. It's a bit tricky, but it will fit.

The corner handles are made using the rod provided with the kit. Three different sizes are provided—use the middle size. To make things a little easier, instead of cutting small segments of rod as spacers between the spade ribs as shown, drill an appropriate size hole for the rod right through the rib on each side of the spade. Now cut your plastic rod handle with the inboard length extending from the outer edge of the spade to the inner rib. Cut the other length as shown, and run the inboard length through the hole in the outer rib and glue to the inner rib and then glue the other end to part 40. Repeat for the other side.

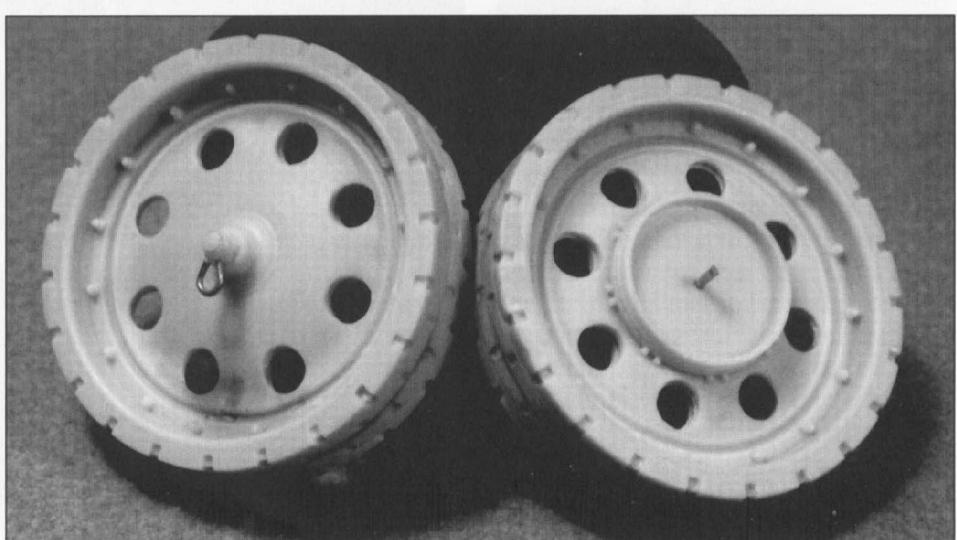
I found that bending brass parts 40 and 41 into the shapes indicated was a little too tricky. So a solution was to make the upper bends first and then glue the upper part onto the spade with the lower ends sticking straight out. Let the glue set and then take a burnisher (a plastic paint brush handle or



The finished spade assemblies prior to painting. The various photo-etched and plastic parts are evident.

angle and glue at this point. I don't know the precise angle. But based on reference photos, it appears that the angle is somewhat greater than the model shown on the box top. I list some references at the end, so you can determine what is correct for your model.

In the traveling position, we now have a few problems. Measure the diameter of the kingpin on the limber mounting post (part R82 in step ten). Drill a corresponding hole through the center of part R41 in step eight. Make sure that the kingpin slides freely through the bottom of R41. Now carefully tack parts R40 and 41 into their respective locations on the trails and then hold the trails together so the ends are even. You'll observe a large gap between parts R40 & 41. Also, looking down and forward from the

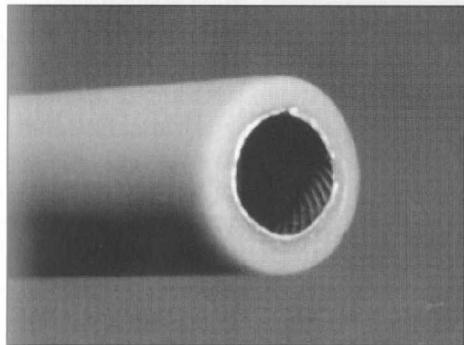


The completed wheels showing the added brass bits.

other implement) and burnish the part into that tight corner. Make your final bend, glue, and that's it. Now you may find that the holes in parts 40 and 41 don't line up with the holes in the spade housing. I just filled mine with putty, sanded flush and said, "forget it... it don't get holes there."

The two small levers (parts R56 and 59) should appear on both sides of each spade, but only two are provided in the kit. You'll have to scratchbuild the other two. The instructions do provide a pretty good photo of this area.

If you're building your gun in the firing position, it's a good idea to attach the spades now. Run the trail spade pin (part R52) through the bottom of the holes drilled in the trail arms. It should fit with no problems. If you do have alignment problems, remove the pin with some solvent and reposition it accordingly.



The barrel end with the On-the-Mark Models brass rifling insert installed.

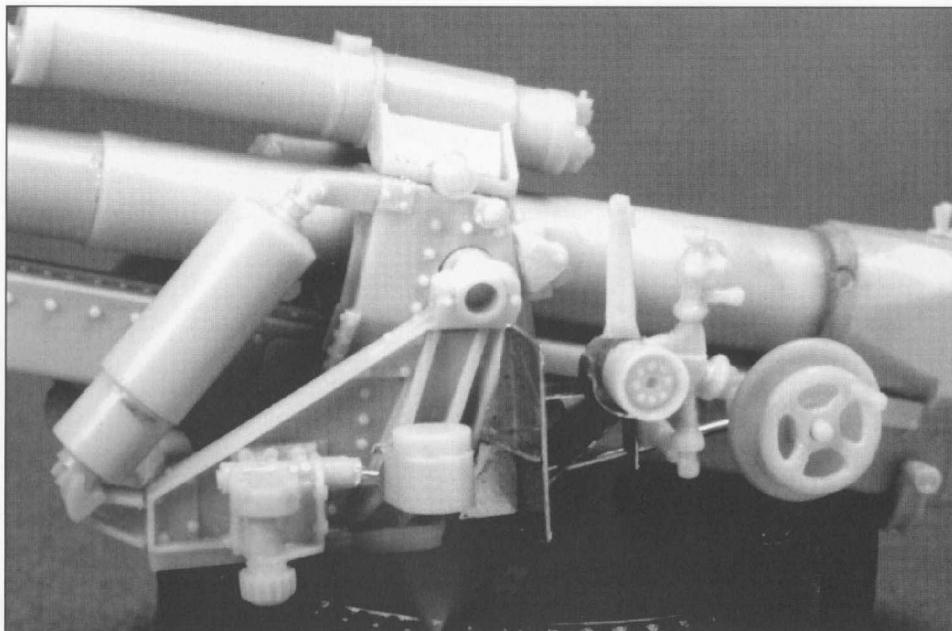
The spades on mine fit so well, glue would not have been necessary to hold the spade in place.

No matter what mode you're building your gun in, this last stage should complete the gun's carriage. Now let's move on to the business end of this weapon; the gun itself.

Big Gun, Go Boom

The construction of the gun is covered throughout steps three, four and five. As we go along I'll refer to the parts in all three of these sections. Get all of your parts cleaned up and spend some time carefully dry-fitting the parts prior to gluing. This is especially critical with mounting lugs (parts R115), the gun slide (R5), and the cradle (R90). Make sure all are square and plumb, because if they're not, it will ruin the overall appearance of the model, no matter how well you've done so far.

The gun tube and the breech block present a problem. On my example, the



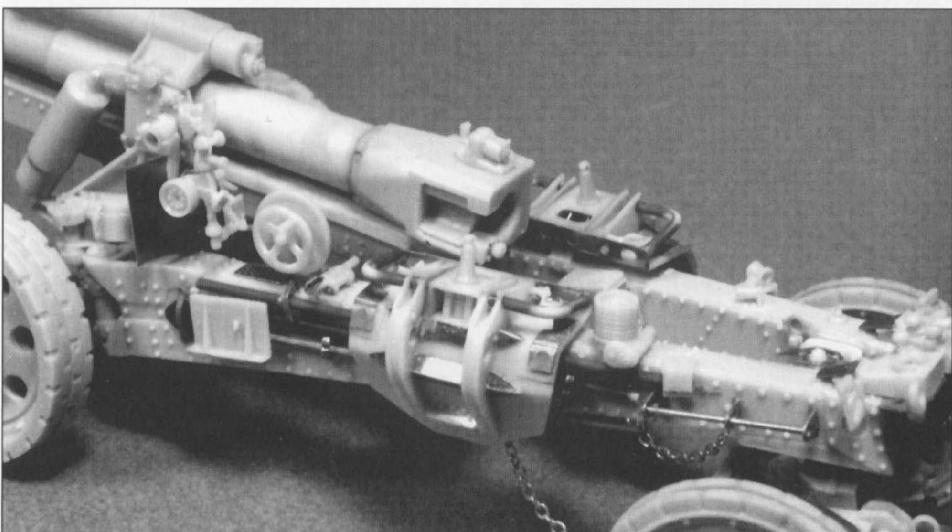
The finished gun prior to mounting on the gun base. The gun is positioned as it would be for travel.

leading edge of the breech (R113) was beveled rather severely. I don't believe this is correct, according to my references. The barrel should connect with the breech block at a flat 90°. Even so, I couldn't get a 90° angle without destroying the barrel retaining ring. Flatten the lower edge of the barrel side of the breech as much as possible. Now assemble the barrel halves. I used more brass rod between the two to strengthen and help keep the whole thing straight.

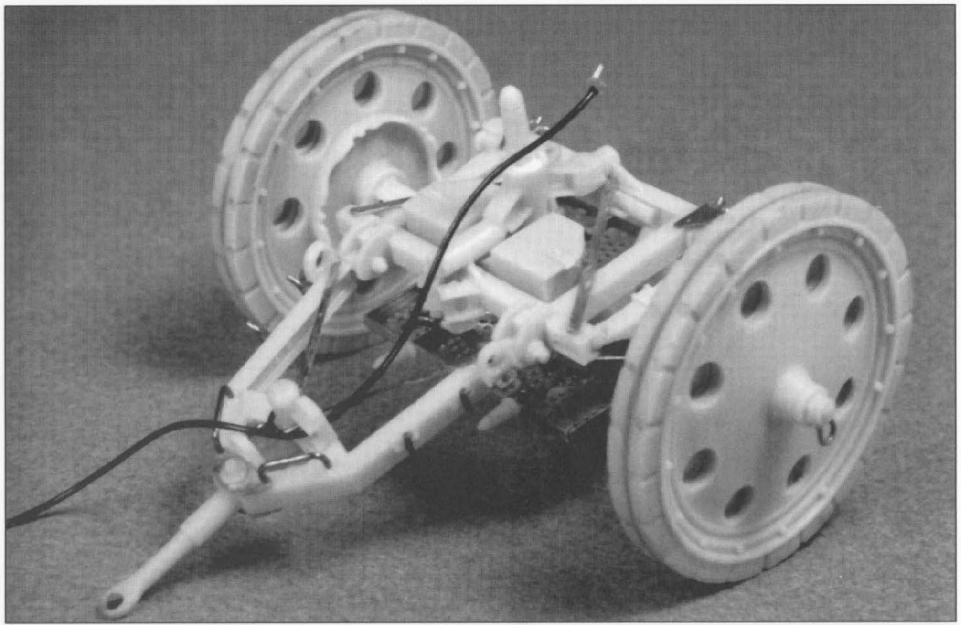
I added an On-The-Mark Models barrel liner at this point to spiff up the end. This photo-etched piece (it's part of a set) reveals the rifling of the inside of the barrel. The Germans used a rather complex set of covers (see diagrams) for the 15.0, and you could cover the barrel end, breech and the optics at this point to save yourself a hunk of work.

The breech block (R100) needs a lot of adjustment to make it fit into the breech correctly. Use a small file and some patience, taking a little off the breech and a little off the block and that should it square up. If you want your breech open, leave off the breech for now. If not, glue in place.

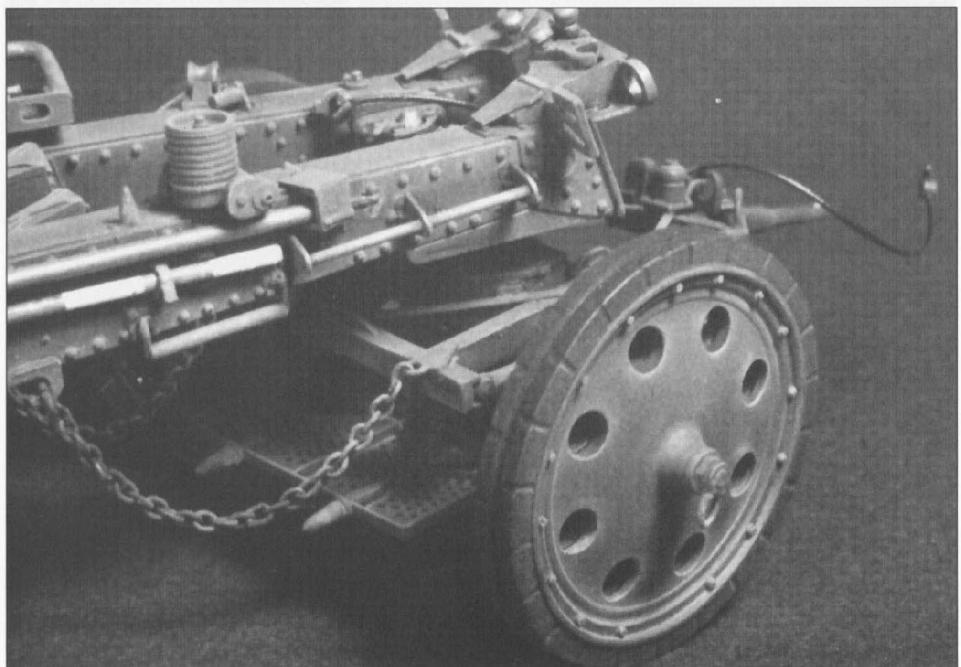
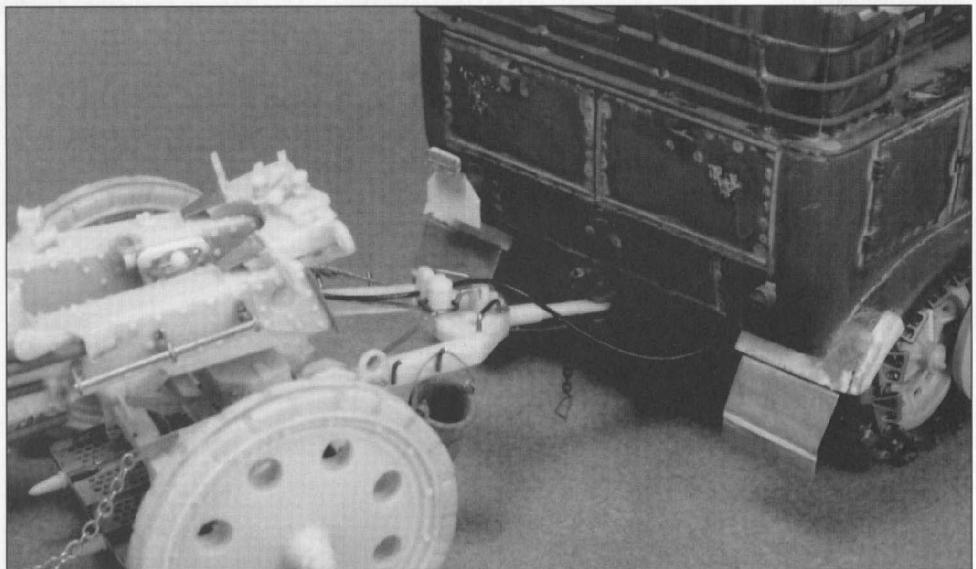
The barrel base, parts R92 and R101, are two more parts where proper alignment is critical. You must be absolutely certain that these parts are parallel to, and aligned with, the bottom edge of the breech. Slide the gun onto the gun slide and check. If there's any problems doing this, then your parts are not aligned properly. Don't get too discouraged at this point, it took me a couple three try's before I got it. The tolerances here are very close, but once there, it will slide together beautifully. This whole assembly now should



The whole finished hunk all locked down and ready to roll. This picture shows off the hundreds of various brass, photo-etched and resin parts.



Here's a few views of the finished, unpainted limber. The shot above shows the air lines added with vinyl tubing and the scratchbuilt air coupling units. The middle photo shows the protze hooked up to the SdKfz. 7 and the spiffy way the lines snake to the towing vehicle. The pintle and cotter pin were scratchbuilt. The bucket's from the scrap box. Below: the front end of the protze showing the spade extensions slung underneath and the safety chain attached to its appropriate position.



be in line and squared off. If not, go back and make adjustments now.

Make sure that you observe the note on step 3 regarding the position of parts R47, R34 and R5.

As you continue through step five, also keep an eye on the alignment of the recuperator housing, parts R112, R108 and R111. Make sure they are lined up with each other, the barrel and the gun slide.

In step five, the note: "Rod to R11" is a typo. It should read "Rod to R111," this is the back of the recuperator housing. If building in traveling mode leave this rod off.

Also in step five, the drawing of parts R49 and 12 is misleading. It appears that there should be two of each, but they are showing the alternate positions of the single handle. Below is another drawing showing the part in the engaged and unlocked

positions. Exactly what this refers to is unknown. I believe it's to lock the breech to the rear when out-of-battery.

There's another typo in step five. "Position of R92 in travel mode" is not correct. This is the firing position. In the traveling mode, the gun would be taken out-of-battery with the breech at the very end of the gun slide.

Interestingly enough, there was what the instructions refer to as a cocking position. This position facilitated reloading the weapon. When the breech block was shut, the gun rammed back to the forward position, ready for firing. This is necessary information if you're building your model in a diorama depicting the gun being reloaded.

If you're building in the firing mode, finish step five. If building in the traveling mode, set aside parts 13, 14, R21 and R61 for now.

When the gun assembly is complete, set the whole thing on the carriage and check the fit. Everything should be level. You may have to add a spacer or sand down one pivot point to accomplish this. Boy oh boy—it's been a lot of work so far, but it now actually looks like a gun!

Bottom of the Ninth

Let's go back to steps seven and eight in preparation for final assembly. We'll be

completing the trails and this stage and bringing together all the subassemblies. The parts I left off: R65, 19, R40, R41, R53 etc., will be added now.

Your gun should still elevate and depress. Set the gun and mount on the carriage. Parts R65 are the gun travel locks and one should be positioned on each trail arm per step seven. The pins on R65 should fit into the ends of the lug for the travel locks; R20. If this works, this should mean that the gun and the trails are even with each other. Adjust accordingly, if not.

At this point, I applied small amounts of glue to the trunnions to freeze the elevation. To finish this step, attach part R47 to the narrow end of part R55—not the wide end as shown in the instructions. This is the lock for the two trails. Attach R55 between the gun trails with the wide end of R55 on the right trail and the narrow end (with part 47) on the left.

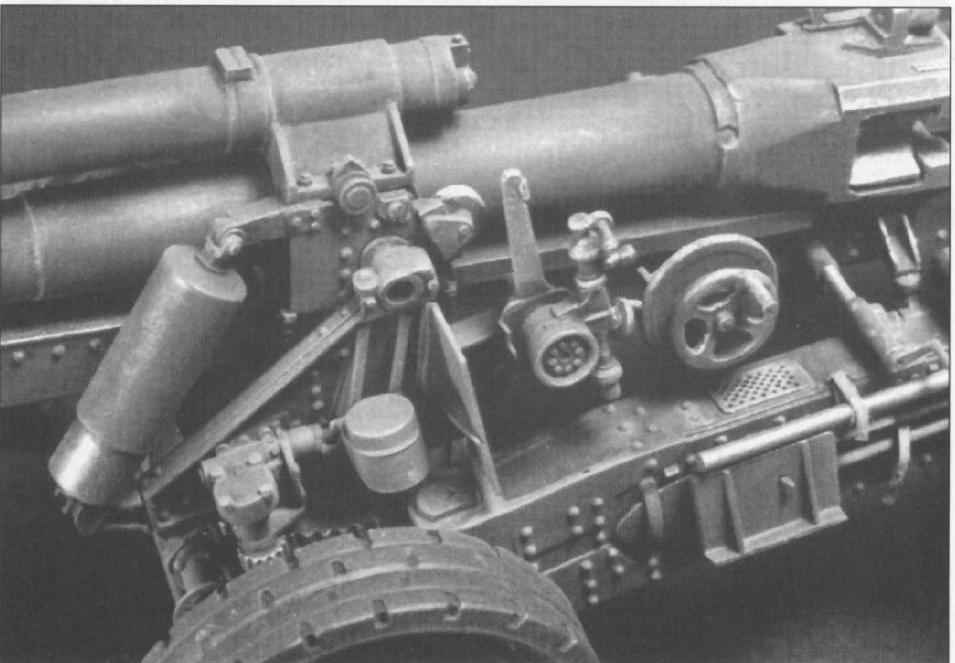
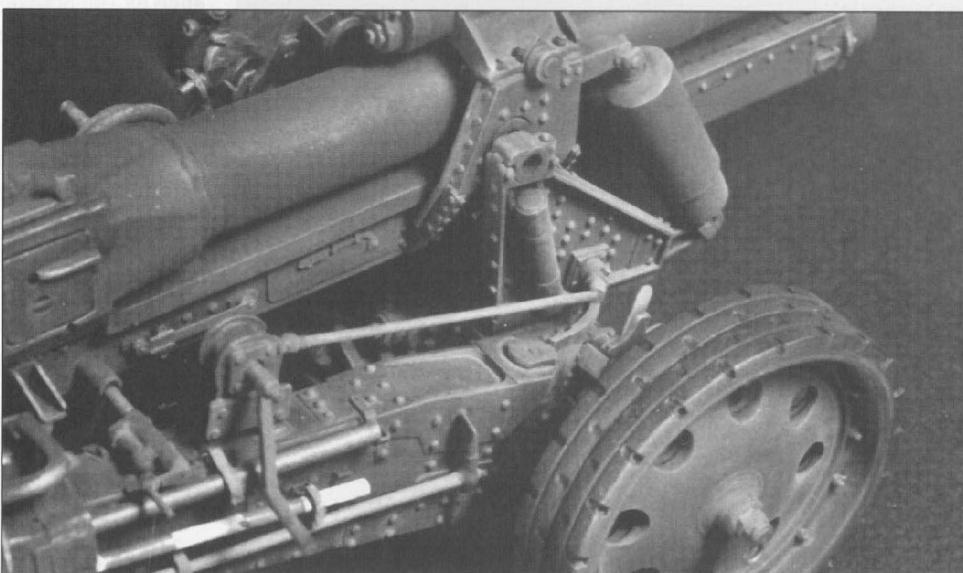
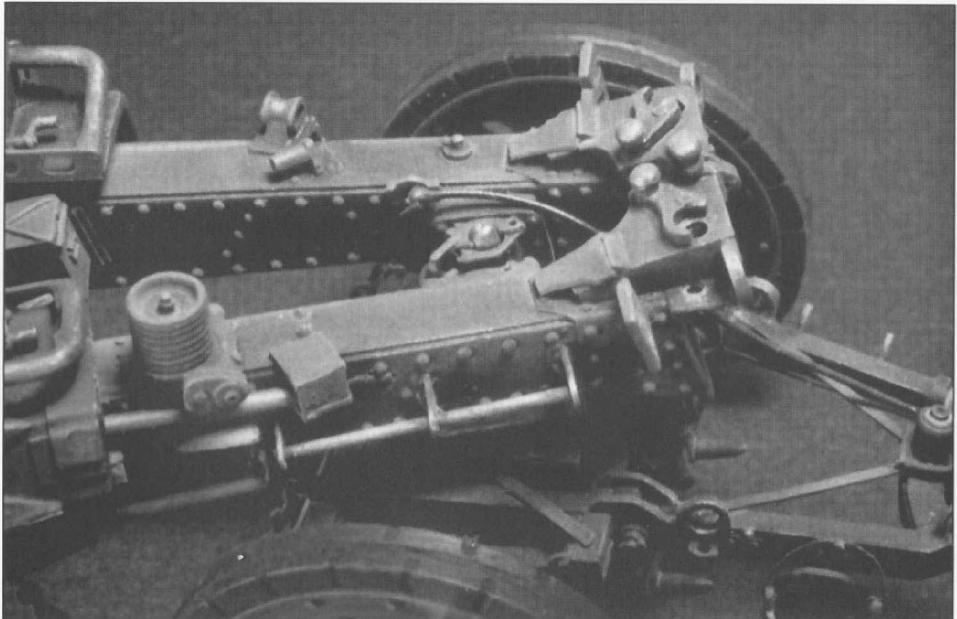
If building in firing mode, determine the elevation you desire and add glue to the trunnions to freeze it. Now in either travel or firing mode, take measurements to trim the elevation hydraulics (parts R97) to their proper length.

I pretty much finished step 6 per the instructions with no problems. Congratulations! If you're building the weapon in firing mode, you're done! Maybe.

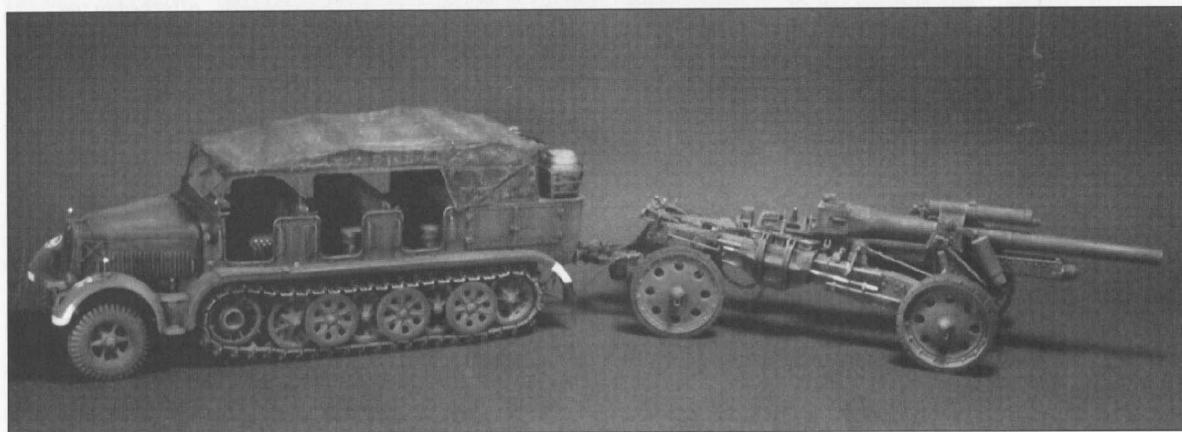
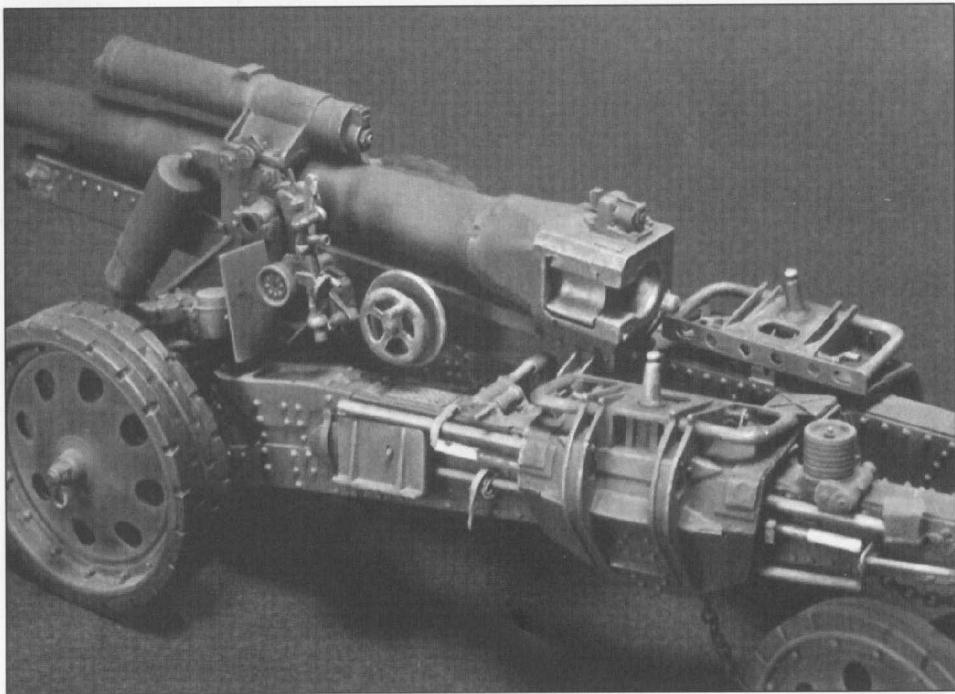
Look... Up in the Sky... It's a Limber... It's a Protze!

The construction of the limber (you know, the protze) is pretty straight forward. There is one option to consider if you're showing your model firing. Etched part 47 and its attendant parts are trail spade extensions for use in mud, sand or other soft ground. Parts R81 (the things that look like bullets) when installed, correspond to holes in etched part 39 on the trail spades. If you want to show them in use, leave off parts R81 and glue the edge of etched part 47 onto part 39 with the flat side down.

There is a good shot of these in *Weapons of the Third Reich*, pg. 199 (see Recce). You may choose to leave them off completely as it seems that not all the limbers carried them.



The finished gun. The shot at the top shows the trails attached to the limber. Just below is the right hand side of the gun. Note the elevation crank and rod. Also note the profusion of cleaning rods and other gear stowed along the sides of each trail. The bottom photo shows off the gun laying equipment and the very well executed casting all throughout the front area of the model.



The finished gun showing off a paint scheme of dark panzer gray. A very dark mixture was obtained with Floquil. It was weathered with washes of gauche to simulate dust and dirt. Limited dry-brushing was done with steel in high wear areas and ground graphite was added to represent worn metal. The top view is of the left hand side of the fieldpiece. Above is the finished gun attached to the 8 ton Sdkfz 7 halftrack. The halftrack was detailed with Show Model brass and a new canvas top.

If you are going to show your weapon being towed as I have, watch how you position part R85, the towing yoke, in relation to parts R80, its attachment point on the limber. Depending on the towing vehicle, this would require more or less of an angle.

There were a few little details I added to finish off my gun. Model ship chain was attached to the limber as safety chain. One end gets attached to etched part 56 and the other is hooked onto part R32. I also added an air line by drilling a hole through part R77 and running a piece of vinyl tubing to the towing vehicle. I added scratchbuilt air-couplings on either end. The tubing should be long enough to reach from part R17 on the right trail to the air coupling on your towing vehicle, along with a little slack for effect.

Tow Head

My tow vehicle is a Tamiya Sdkfz 7 half-track. This was an old model that was gathering dust of my shelf for a few years. I decided to give it new life by adding Show Model photo-etched parts, Model Kasten wheels, tracks and new top.

Compared to the gun, this was a piece of cake. The hardest part was building the frame for the soft top. I used brass rod and strip for this. It might seem a shame to cover it all up, but I feel this is the best way to get an accurate looking top. The canvas was formed with tissue soaked with white glue.

If you put your face right down at table top level, you can still get a peek at the frame underneath the top!

The Sdkfz 7 was by far the most common towing vehicle, especially in the early war years. I have seen other vehicles, such as the Schwere Wehrmachtschlepper half-track, or even large trucks as haulers.

The Big Wrap Up

This kit was challenging and I would not recommend it for your first resin kit. The level of complexity might be intimidating to some. In many ways the kit is like a scratchbuilding project that's already half-way done for you. However, given the level of quality and its semi-low price, it will be the choice for any with a little experience under their belts. If you like the German stuff this one will be hard to resist.

—Scot Bradley

MMiR RECCE

Verlinden 15cm SfH Howitzer. Kit number VP4 887. Purchased from VLS Mail Order, Lone Star Industrial Park, 811 Lone Star Drive, O'Fallon, MO 63366, (314) 281-5700. Shipping time, approximately one week. The list price is \$89.95. I belong to their "Master's Group" which entitles me to a 25% discount and free shipping. The final cost was \$67.50

References

- Panzer in Saumur No. 3*, Dai Nippon Kaigg, 1992. Relatively easy to find, covers the 150 in association with the Hummel SPG. Many good photos.
- German Artillery of World War II*, Ian Hogg, Arms and Armour Press, 1974. A little harder to find. Check a good military bookstore or your local library.
- Weapons of the Third Reich*, Terry Gander and Peter Chamberlin, Doubleday, 1979. Same deal.

German Language

- Das Buch der Artillerie '39-'45*, J. Engleman, Podzun Pallas-Verlag, 1983.
- Schwere feldhaubitze 18*, Waffen Revue No. 40, Journal-Verlag, 1981.

Mini Men

Verlinden

Russian Tank Crew WWII

Kit Number 849

WE DON'T COVER MUCH OF THE VERLINDEN STUFF IN these pages. We don't have anything against them, it's just that do to the sheer volume of what's released, this would be Verlinden Magazine Number Two if we tried to keep up with it all!

This set caught our eye because of all the Russian armor that's now popping up. The set is composed of two half figures, which would presumably be used to plug up a hatch opening or two. Both figures wear the standard Soviet tanker's overalls and the familiar duck-cloth helmet. The first figure is resting his arm and hand on a hatch and his other arm is propped on its edge. He has a German Luger tucked into his belt.

This last detail causes him to bear a remarkable similarity to an illustration from the Osprey book on the "Great Patriotic War." In the painting, a tanker holds up a captured Nazi flag in one hand and a bottle of Vodka (or mineral water) in the other. It wouldn't take much to convert our man to this pose,

VLS Russian Tank Crew



just a lower body and a tweek or two of the arms.

The second figure is simply posed with his arms folded. He wears what appears to be the tanker's leather jacket. The casting ends precisely at the belt, so again, a full figure conversion would be easy. Of course, the coat should continue below the belt.

In the past, Verlinden figures have tended to run a bit on the large side. These are somewhat smaller than the norm and therefore are more or less in the ballpark. Both these guys would look great poking out of the any one of the new DML JS kits or any of the numerous WWII Soviet armor kits now available.

There's lots of good reference out there of this subject. We suggest: *The Red Army of the Great Patriotic War 1941-5*, number 216 in the Osprey Men-at-Arms Series and (of course) Andrew Mollo's *The Armed Forces of World War II, Uniforms, insignia and organization*.

Italeri

Soviet Tank Crew (1935-1942)

THIS IS AMONG THE MANY NEW ITEMS RECENTLY released from Italeri, but produced by the Russian firm of Zvesda. They are the producers of the BT-5 released last year under the Italeri label. Figure sets have appeared before from Zvesda, but the quality has been anything but stellar. Their previous Russian Infantry sets were just not very good.

Well, surprise, surprise, this latest set is top notch. This set of four crewman appears to have been designed to fit into the BT-5. Three of the figures occupy some spot on the vehicle and a fourth stands outside.

The overall standard of sculpting is quite good and not at all what one has come to expect from Zvesda. Each figure is well rendered and the poses are very convincing. They are described as an early war crew, but only a few details identify them as such. The Commander wears what appears to be the tanker's long leather jacket. Although most of

our research shows that this jacket was single-breasted rather than the double-breasted versions shown on the figure. Regardless, it is very delicately modeled, with even the leather taping in evidence across the chest. The jacket looks almost identical to those worn by French tankers. The Soviets used a version of the French "Adrian" helmet during the pre-war period, so they may have also been inspired by French leather goods as well.

Each of the other figures wear the standard tanker's overalls called a "telogreika." All of them wears the Sam-Brown belt. This may be another indication of an early war gear, as this was mostly seen on officers after the start of hostilities.

Each also wears the standard tanker's helmet and each has the flaps of the helmet folded or worn down in a different way. The three figures that occupy the tank are sculpted in such a way as to accommodate some portion of the vehicle. The standing crewman in the overalls grasps the hatch of the BT, while the seated crewman with the flag is "notched" to fit into the turret top and his hand rests on the turret's roof. The driver figure creates a snug fit into the driver's position. This particular figure would also look good peeking out of T-34.

The sculpting of each figure's face is extremely entertaining. Each is the consummate dogface. These guys look mean, nasty and ugly. Hands and feet—a big problem on a lot of figures, are rendered very well. The few add-on details in the kit are also rendered well. They are two Tokarev pistol holsters and a map case for the commander.

Overall we were very impressed by the set and would recommend it to any fan of Russian WWII armor.

For references check out those listed with the Verlinden review.

DML

German Self-Propelled Gun Crew

Kit number 6016

THIS KIT OF FOUR FIGURES APPEARS TO BE DESIGNED to go along with the earlier DML Nashorn kit. Two of the figures included are man-handling 8.8 cm rounds, so that would preclude their use with the Hummel. It has also been announced that these four gentlemen will be included in the DML kit of the Grille SPG.

As we have come to expect, these figures are all up to the high standards that DML has set over the last year or two with its

Italeri Russian Crew



many figure releases. The four are all dressed in the heavy winter reversible jackets and trousers. All also wear the thick winter wool gloves. Three wear the 1943 field cap and the fourth wears the standard side cap.

The casting is crisp and clean with very little flash. Many of the unique features of the winter uniform have been rendered, such as the inner flap on the coats and the button-up front of the trousers.

The two figures handing off the shell make an especially nice combination as one hefts the shell up and one

stretches out to receive it. Three extra shells are provided in addition to the one provided for the figure itself. The third figure is posed carrying a full jerrycan and he really seems to bear the weight of the full fuel can. The can's handle is designed so that if the center rung is cut away, the figure's hand fits perfectly down around it for a very realistic effect. The can itself is exceptional—probably the best jerrycan we have ever seen. The can is molded in two pieces and the cap mechanism is properly on only one half. The cap mechanism itself is detailed. The can is complete with the manufacturer's stamping on one side (conveniently on the side that faces out). A really, really nice item. Why anyone has waited so long to make a proper one is a mystery. The only other mystery is why DML only includes one of these little gems. Let's hope that they release these in quantity soon.

The fourth figure is presumably the commander, as he is the only one posed with ear and throat phones. DML includes the same communications complement that is

included in its Waffen SS Tank Crew. In addition to the ear pads, a set of photo-etched parts is included for the throat mike and the headset bands. A full set is provided, but you'll only need one pair. This leaves a few extra of these great little items for your parts box.

Although this set is intended to crew a Nashorn, we think it would go great with any of the latest German armor releases, like the Panther or the Tiger II.

For reference, the box art will be hard to beat. Mr. Volstad has really out done himself on this one. The winter uniform is illustrated very clearly in all its forms and the colors are dead-on. Some of the camouflage items are shown slightly faded and if one can impart this on a figure it would greatly enhance its realism.

If you desire additional reference, check out Eric Lefevre's excellent *La Wehrmacht*. Published in French, this volume covers all manner of German gear and equipment, kinda hard to find though, check with Articles of War in Chicago or your local bookseller.

U.S. Tank Crew

Kit number 3020

THE U.S. TANK CREW FROM OUR PALS AT DML IS not exactly new. It was originally included in their kit of the M1A1 "Heavy." It is now available as a separate set.

The set is composed of four figures. Uniquely, not all four are posed actually on the tank. Figures one and two are posed standing next to their M1, with number two casually hanging his arm on the vehicle. Number three represents the driver and number four is posed relaxing in the loader's hatch.

The two standing figures are very nice all by themselves. Each wears a gas mask bag around the waist—a common sight during the Gulf War. Each also wears the common M92F shoulder holster favored among tankers. The holster itself is an add-on item, while the rest of the holster is molded on. Extra clip holders for the side-arm are also molded-on both figures.

One of the standing dudes (the commander?) wears the modern version of the "chicken plate" combat vehicle crewman (CVC) body armor with its characteristic Velcro retaining straps. He is also sculpted with a scarf tied around his neck which gives him a bulky "bad-ass" look. Along those lines he totes a WWII vintage M3 Grease-Gun. This was standard issue to 40's tankers. We have

DML German SPG Crew



seen photos of this gun in modern use before, but we're not sure how the guns are obtained, or if they are still issued. If anyone out there has more intel on this, drop us a line.

The crewman perched in the turret wears the shoulder holster, but aside from that, he is just outfitted in standard BDUs. The final crewman is the driver and he is posed in the reclining position of an M1 driver. He wears a scarf over his face in addition to a shoulder holster.

The only other piece of equipment offered is a set of goggles for two of the crewman. The instructions show these fitted to the driver and the turret rider.

One of the most interesting features of this set is that each of the figure's heads are provided bald. The helmets are provided as three-piece assemblies, composed of the top hard shell and the side ear phone/flaps. This gives each head a very realistic attitude, due to the slight variation created when installing the flaps. This also makes the heads useful in scratchbuilding and conversion projects. The heads, by the way, are some of DML's better efforts, the features and expression being especially convincing.

This excellent set would look great on the M1, but equally nice around the DML's MLRS, the Italeri 155mm SP Howitzer or the Minicraft M113A2. Many of the uniform details are standard "CVC" issue which makes them suitable for almost any modern armored vehicle.

For reference, check the fantastic *American Soldier, U.S. Armies in Uniform, 1755 to the present*, by Philip Katcher or *Inside the US Army Today*, by Gordon L. Rottman, Osprey Elite Series number 20.

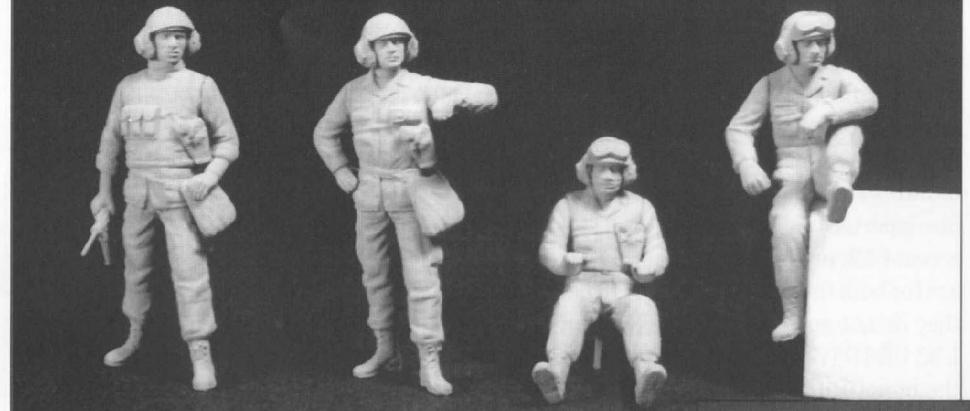
U.S. Helicopter Crew

Kit number 3311

THIS NEW SET INCLUDES FOUR FIGURES: AN OH-6A pilot, a M-60 OH-6 door gunner, a UH-1D/H door gunner with M23 gun kit, and another pilot figure holding a map and pointing. The first two are the same ones found in the DML OH-6A Loach kit; the other two are new poses. DML's familiar yellow styrene sprue forms the figures and an additional gray plastic runner makes into the two M-60 machine guns and their ammo supplies.

According to the box top painting, the Loach pilot is supposed to resemble Capt. Hugh Mills, the Troop commander for Charlie Troop, 16th Cav (Air) in Vietnam in 1971. The second figure is pointing out something and

DML Modern US Tank Crew



the pose is well suited to add to the left front seat of the OH-6 kit as the Oscar (Observer). A holstered M10 .38cal S&W revolver and K-Bar style survival knife (sheathed) are provided for both pilot's belts. Vietnam pilots preferred shoulder holsters to move the pistol out from under the seat belt so we wish one of these guys had that option.

Both pilots are molded well enough with competent faces and reasonable proportions. Both have "Chicken Plate" body armor and are wearing NOMEX two piece flying suits. These are done nicely with details generally petite. Too bad the pencil holders on the left sleeve do not have the obligatory U.S. Government black ball-point sticking out the top! Pilot helmets are the SPH-4 "Mickey Mouse Ear" type common in Vietnam after 1969 and used long after in case you want to do a post-war helicopter. Helmet microphones are not given so you will have to scratchbuild these and the helmet wiring.

The OH-6A pilot has rolled up sleeves and does not have molded on NOMEX gloves. This is a bit Hollywood-like because all you

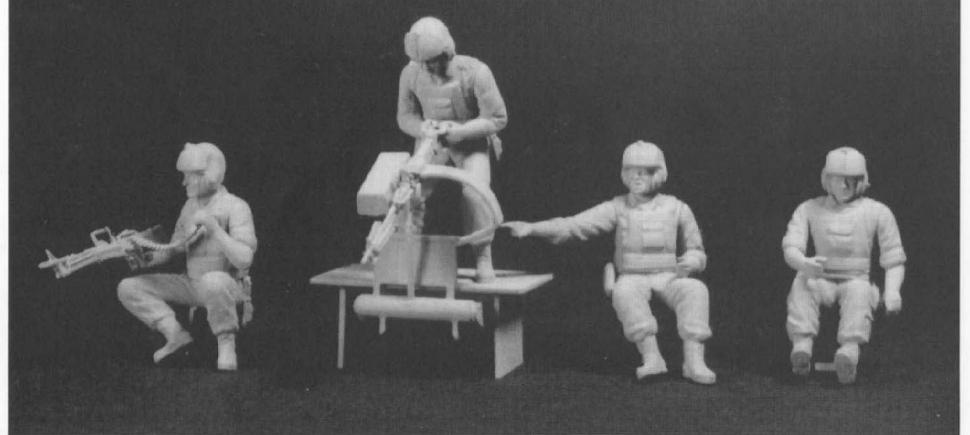
had to do is see the results of one crash and burn and you would never again expose this much skin to fire risk. NOMEX gloves were highly prized items and always worn if available.

The Loach gunner is posed sitting on the right rear seat and holds a "bungee chord" hung M-60 infantry model. A belt of 7.62mm ammo is provided for this gun and separate bi-pod legs are included. These can be left off since many gunners removed them to lighten the gun. Like the OH-6 pilot this one also has rolled up sleeves and no gloves.

The last figure in the set,



DML Helicopter Crew



the Huey door gunner, is perhaps the most intriguing. The figure is posed as if standing up to lean out over the gun mount to look down past the skids. This is an aggressive, albeit common, way to shoot the M23 mount, but the question is: what Huey kit is this intended to mount on? DML did not mold this pose in a stand alone fashion since the M23 mount structure will not stand up unsupported, and no Huey floor is given. A recent DML promo says the figures in this kit are for both the OH-6A and a "UH-1," but since they do not make a Huey in 1/35, the Revell 1/32 UH-1D (Beast!) is the wrong scale, and the new UH-1B from Seminar is the wrong type of Huey for the M23 mount, what do we put this guy on? Is DML letting on to a future helicopter kit? Time will tell.

The M23 gun kit includes the mount frame with integrally molded ammo box, the pole mount with pintle, ammo chute, and a nice M-60D. The gun is very nice, the ammo chute is tough to bend to the required shape though, and the ammo box is too narrow (try to put the 7.62mm belt in it and you see the problem). The actual box was little more than a 1000 round ammo can with the top removed.

The D model M-60 was the aircraft mount with butterfly grips and lightened barrel assembly. Since it now appears on some tanks, the M48A5 for example, tank modelers might want to cannibalize from this kit. If you want to backdate the Seminar UH-1B to the M-16 four gun system then by all means buy four of these kits to get the needed M-60s.

Both gunners have belt hung and holstered pistols (.45cal M1911 ACP) and

sheathed survival knives. Helmets are the same as above and need microphones added also. Finally, the Chicken Plates on these figures should all be the same size ("one size fits all") which they are not, and they should come up a bit higher around the neck. They were a notorious source of neck injuries in hard landings. DML's sculptor has made each armor plate fit the figure instead of standardizing the armor plate size and fitting the human parts behind it. This is a minor complaint at best since they look pretty good.

Assembly help is on the back of the box and painting info is confined to box art (which is, as usual, terrific). All in all, this is a welcome addition to DML's figure line and will make some options available to builders of 1/35 choppers.

Captain Edward V. Rickenbacker Ritmeister Manfred von Richthofen Resin 1/12th(?) scale busts

THE FIRST WORLD WAR IS A FASCINATING SUBJECT that which has received little coverage from kit manufacturers. Emhar Models have released both Male and Female versions of the British Mark IV and Tauro has released two German A7Vs, however the only difference is the decal sheet. There has been a scattering of other First World War AFVs released by resin kit manufacturers.

There has been better coverage of this conflict by figure manufacturers. Scale Link has a large line of white metal First World War figures including British, German, French, United States, and even Belgian soldiers in 54mm. Metal Models (better known for their Napoleonic figures) has recently released four beautiful figures of 54mm WWI soldiers. Dave Parkins and Fusilier Miniatures also have a line of nice WWI figures.

DML has now thrown their "Hat in the Ring" with the release of two 1/12th scale resin busts. The first is of Captain Edward V. Rickenbacker, and the second is of Ritmeister Manfred von Richthofen. Sculpted by Mike Good, both are excellent representations of "Captain Eddie" and "The Red Baron."

The Rickenbacker kit comes in three well molded pieces, head, torso and pedestal. The von Richthofen kit differs in that the Baron's hat is a separately molded part, as are the tops of his arms. Virtually no preparation is needed before assembly. On our kits, only moderate sanding was needed on the bottom of the torso where it joins with the pedestal. A very small amount of putty

was used to fill a slight groove in the pedestal. You can't ask for better fit of the pieces.

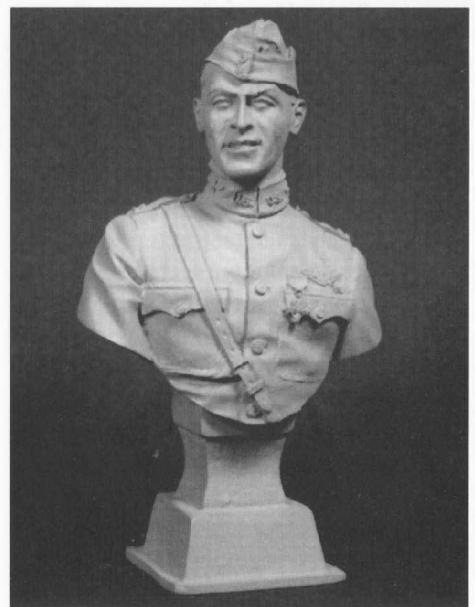
Accuracy of the uniforms is right on the money. Attention to detail is excellent. Particularly well done is the Distinguished Service Cross worn above Captain Rickenbacker's left breast pocket and the 94th Aero Squadron's "Hat in the Ring" unit pin worn next to his U.S.A.S. pilot wings. The Baron's medals are equally nice and the collar is beautifully molded as well—the head fitting down into it very realistically. The roundels on von Richthofen's hat are also exquisitely rendered.

The only downside of these kits is (at least at the time of this writing) is the fact that they are only available by purchasing either DML's FOKKER Dr. 1 (kit #5903) or the SPAD XIII (kit #5904). Let us hope that DML releases both these fine busts as separate kits. The Rickenbacker kit was listed as a separate item in the DML 1993 catalog (under their Knights of the Sky series), but it did not yet have a stock number. In the meantime, you will have to purchase the whole kit and try to sell the rest of it to one of those "other" modelers!

If you're looking for a good figure to start or to practice your painting skills, these two outstanding figures are perfect for you. Their large scale makes detail painting easier, and you only have one-third of a figure to paint—that's two thirds less area to make mistakes!

For reference check out Blanford Press' *Army Uniforms of World War I*, by Andrew Mollo and Pierre Turner.

—Compiled by Ken Dugan,
Pete Harlem and Steve Roberts



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